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# WE ROLLED UP OUR SLEEVES

## A HISTORY OF THE UNITED JEWISH FUND AND COUNCIL OF SAINT PAUL AND ITS BENEFICIARY AGENCIES

By Marilyn J. Chiat
and
Chester Proshan

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# PREFACE

To keep the past whole and vivid. To tie the present and past together for all days. To affirm our roots and dream visions for the future. All these were the bases for the original United Jewish Fund and Council Oral History Project as first conceived by UJFC Associate Director Dr. H. Jack Mayer and the UJFC Young Women's Council in the mid 1970s.

From that inspiration came a charge by the UJFC Board of Directors to proceed with Phase I: a community-wide effort to bring out, via tape-recorded interviews with trained interviewers, the thoughts, feelings, ideas and reminiscenses of older members of our Saint Paul Jewish community. In 1978, the Fund was awarded a Minnesota Humanities grant to assist in the development of the first phase, and the Steering Committee of the Oral History Project, chaired by Norman Goldstein, decided to focus on the early neighborhoods of Saint Paul Jewry, beginning with the West Side community. Under the direction of Morris Lapidos, Executive Director; Lois Devitt, Women's Division Director; Avy Weberman, Staff Associate; and Riv-Ellen Prell-Foldes, Project Consultant, the project was undertaken, culminating in the production of a slide show, "A Dialogue With Our Past," public discussions, an Oral History booklet and an exhibition of photographs and memorabilia for the public.

To continue the Oral History Project, Phase II focused on the historical overview of how the UJFC and beneficiary organizations developed to yield the highly sophisticated communal network of today. Marilyn Chiat and Chester Proshan were commissioned to produce this volume, a historical book documenting the development of the Saint Paul Jewish community. Interviews were done with community leaders, organizational documents examined, Phase I tapes analyzed and a history written. Here, again, Lois Devitt has contributed her time and efforts to chairing the overall committee. Michael Greenberg, UJFC staff associate, coordinated the project in the early 1980s, Judy Shapiro, UJFC associate director, provided guidance, knowledge and a gentle hand in her position as staff liaison, while Kim Marsh, executive director, oversaw the entire Phase II project.

The importance of this project to our community cannot be overstated, for it concretely demonstrates how we came to be. The accounts from our Jewish leaders are our link to and preservation of our collective past. Leo Baeck perhaps said it best, in his book *This People Israel,* when he wrote:

> This people stepped back from the work of days in order to see the path of the weeks, from the events of the months, to see the journey of the years. ... In the same way, it acquired the ability to think in generations and to live in generations. ... Through history, this people came to be what it is: the people of the great memory and the great expectation.

The Jewish community of Saint Paul inculcates "great memory" and "great expectation." We thank everyone who was involved for the last decade: interviewees, interviewers, committee people, staff, organizational representatives and the general community for its support. And we offer our whole-hearted congratulations and thanks to Marilyn and Chester for their professional and personal dedication, dedication which surely illuminates us and future generations to come.

GERARD HIRSCHHORN
UJFC President

KIMBALL MARSH
Executive Director

# INTRODUCTION

*"... and he made him a coat of many colors."*
*Genesis 37:3*

This book is a beginning. It is the first attempt to record the history of the United Jewish Fund and Council (UJFC) and its beneficiary agencies. As a first history, its main objective is to get the facts straight, to present a comprehensive account from factual information. At the same time, it is also concerned with providing an interpretation of the development of the UJFC and its beneficiary agencies.

The history of Jewish social welfare in Saint Paul is a history of a community having tried to strike a balance between two seemingly opposite goals, unity and diversity. Since its formation over 120 years ago, the Saint Paul Jewish community has had a heterogeneous population in terms of national origins and cultural heritage, religious tradition and practice, and social and economic standing. Like Joseph's coat, it is made up of colorfully different and various strands. And the community has prized its diverse heritage. It has also prized communal solidarity and integration, wanting to weave itself into a whole cloth from its many strands. The community has made various attempts over the decades to achieve consensus on communal needs and the methods to be employed to meet them. Although none of the attempts has succeeded in pleasing completely the various subgroups within Saint Paul Jewry, the UJFC and its beneficiary agencies have come the closest to doing so. Grounded in the social welfare philosophy of federation, these organizations have made the greatest strides in providing the kinds of programs and services that respect and enhance the integrity and independence of the groups within the Saint Paul Jewish population at the same time that they affirm the notion of Jewish community.

Chapter One reviews the history of Saint Paul Jewry, focusing on the events and circumstances that have infused it with its diverse character. Chapter Two follows with an examination of the history of Jewish social welfare in Saint Paul, including that of the UJFC and the major developments prior to its founding. Chapters Three through Nine present individual histories of the UJFC's seven beneficiary agencies. Chapter Ten considers the future of Jewish social welfare in Saint Paul.

Research for the book was carried out in 1984. The vast majority of sources used were original, usually organizational materials. In addition, collected primary sources and secondary sources were used and oral interviews were conducted. Research assistance was provided by Jeanne Boutang, Harriet Kohen, Roxanne Markoff, and Linda Schloff of the University of Minnesota Graduate School and by Scott Gordon, Babette Hanish, and Amy Taswell.

The authors are indebted to a number of individuals and organizations for their assistance and support. The UJFC must be commended for its foresight in commissioning this study. Kimball Marsh, its director, and Judy Shapiro, associate director, who functioned as project liaison, were at all times supportive of the effort. And to the staff of the UJFC must go a special thank you for their tolerance of our "invasion" of their office space and their time.

A history of this type could not be written without the cooperation of the agencies under study and the community they serve. Agency directors and their staffs went out of their way to make their data available to researchers. The community never failed to answer our call, providing material and volunteer help when requested. Special thanks to those community members who served on committees that contributed to the ongoing project and the community liaison, Lois Devitt.

Thanks must also go to several archives at which research was conducted and their staffs. These include the American Jewish Archives, the Minnesota Historical Society, and the University of Minnesota reference librarians.

A number of individuals helped prepare the manuscript. Several community members generously gave of their time to serve as readers: William Hoffman, Diane Ladenson, Sol Pogoriler, Rhoda Mains, and Annette Newman. Questions, major and minor, were unfailingly answered by Bette Gottesman, Sharon Posnansky, and Avrom Robinow. Carol Masters did her usual professional job in editing the manuscript, as did Arlene Appelbaum in giving form to our vision of the finished book.

Professional considerations aside, we would now like to take note of the personal side of the ledger. We dedicate this book to two very understanding souls, Reiko Yumura Proshan and Harvey Jay Chiat.

Saint Paul, Minnesota
Spring 5745 (1985)

Marilyn J. Chiat
Chester Proshan

# CHAPTER 1

# The Saint Paul Jewish Community: A Historical Perspective

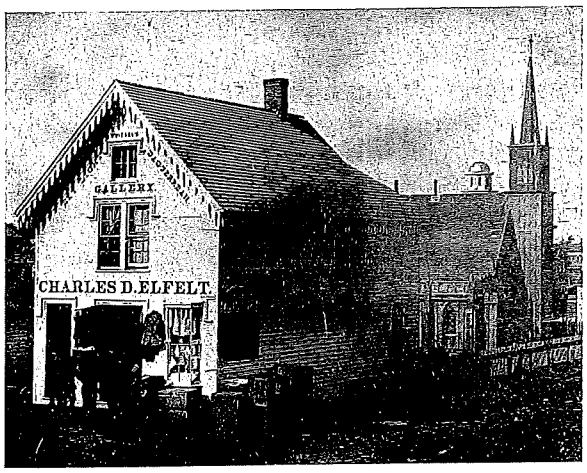
## Beginnings

The first Jewish settlers in Saint Paul arrived in the 1840s. Largely attracted by the opportunities for adventure and profit offered by the expanding territories west of the Mississippi in the mid-nineteenth century, they set the pattern for all who followed. They shared one important characteristic, their religious heritage, Judaism, but on the whole were not a homogeneous group. Rather, coming from as far as England and Germany and as near as Georgia and Pennsylvania, they displayed a diversity — a variety of tongues and traditions — that was increased by those who came later.

The need for religious community expressed itself early among these first settlers. In spring 1856, two years before the territory of Minnesota was granted statehood, eight families and several young men established a congregation, Mount Zion. One of the first acts of the new congregation was to purchase land for a cemetery, an action that may be taken as the beginning of organized Jewish life in Saint Paul.

Establishing a cohesive community was not without difficulties. Not all the Jewish settlers chose to become members of the new congregation. Furthermore, the diverse backgrounds of the founding members of Mount Zion generated disputes as to which **minhag** (rite) the new congregation should follow. Orthodoxy was not in dispute; all agreed in principle to that. The question was which type of Orthodox ritual to adopt. The solution was neither unexpected nor unfamiliar: a second congregation was formed — Ahabath Achim (Love of Brothers).

Fate and economics soon brought the two groups back together. The Panic of 1857, caused by the failure of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company, left the congregations realizing that the Saint Paul Jewish community could not afford the luxury of being divided in its worship. Personal tragedy reinforced this conclusion. When two individuals whose families belonged to Ahabath Achim died, the matter of burial became a concern, as Mount Zion's cemetery was the only Jewish burial ground in the territory. Arguments regarding ritual were set aside and Mount Zion consented to provide the deceased with proper Jewish burials. Out of tragedy came consolidation; Mount Zion became Saint Paul's only congregation. The decision set a pattern for the community; diversity was tolerated, but unity for the common good took precedent. This test was the community's first, but certainly not its last.




**Charles D. Elfelt's Store, Clothing and Furnishings. Third and Cedar Streets. 1852.** ***From the Collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.***

By 1870 Mount Zion decided to leave the space it had been renting and build its own synagogue. Still small, numbering only some seventy-five mostly German adults and children, the congregation in 1871 erected a small frame structure on the southwest corner of Tenth and Minnesota. The decision to build a synagogue signaled a watershed in the development of Saint Paul's Jewish community; the community now possessed a religious institution and a group of religious leaders confident enough to visibly take their place within the community at large.

After the Civil War, the population of Saint Paul, and its Jewish community, grew. At the time of its incorporation in 1855 Saint Paul had a population of 5,000, some thirty-five (0.7%) of whom were Jewish. By 1880, the city's population had grown to 80,000, 225 (0.5%) of whom were Jews. A small wave of immigrants accounted for the increase in the number of Jewish residents. Mostly from Eastern Europe, these later arrivals were not German-speaking, as so many of the earlier Jewish settlers were, but used Yiddish as their mother tongue. Arriving in Saint Paul, they found little in common

with the established Jewish community. Mount Zion's **minhag** was conducted in languages they did not understand, German and English, and although it was Orthodox, the Frankfurt-am-Main ritual it followed was considered too liberal by Eastern European standards. Rather than join such an alien synagogue and compromise their traditions, in 1872 the new settlers founded their own congregation, Hebrah Bene Ya'akob (Congregation Sons of Jacob); shortly thereafter they purchased land for a cemetery. In 1881 the congregation was sufficiently well established to erect its own building, on College Avenue between Wabasha and Saint Peter.

For almost a decade this second wave of Jewish settlers and their co-religionists at Mount Zion developed parallel religious, social, and cultural lives. Although the groups lived in the same neighborhood, particularly between Jackson and Saint Peter and Eighth and Tenth Streets, no pressing need brought them together into a single Jewish community, because such unifying forces as anti-Semitism and poverty were largely nonexistent.

Contributing further to the separation of the two groups was the manner in which they perceived their positions vis-à-vis the general community. The Mount Zion Jews identified with German ethnicity, including German culture and language (sermons at Mount Zion, for instance, were in German). They thus shared in an identity that gave them status as pioneers in Saint Paul, since Germans — Jews and Christians — were among the first settlers in the city. Even German-speaking Jews who came to Saint Paul much later, once integrated into the earlier group, were endowed with this special status. By identifying with German Christians, German-speaking Jews gained entrée into the higher echelons of the community, achieving financial, civic, and social success. Some, however, paid a price for such acceptance — total assimilation. Although no statistics exist, a cursory survey of Saint Paul's leading families indicates that several have Jewish antecedents.

The second group of Jewish settlers, in contrast, tended to be more introverted. The "Polish" community, as it was known, was primarily concerned with maintaining as many old world traditions as possible while making limited adjustment

**Group of Indian men in front of Joseph Ullmann Store. Fifth and Rosabel. 1912.** ***Photo: Brown's Photo Craft Shop. From the Collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.***

> *"There [were] German Jews and there were Jews ... If you weren't a German Jew you weren't acceptable."*

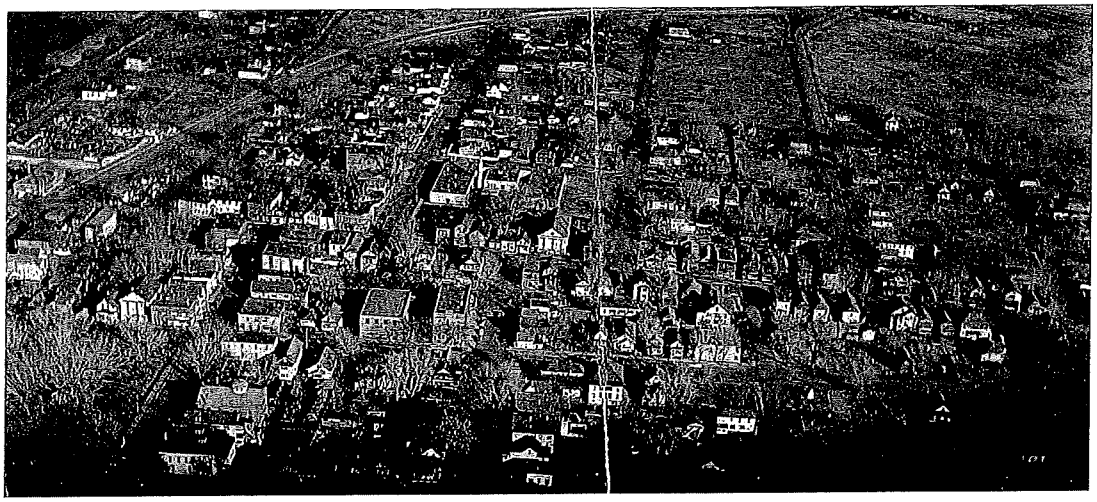
to the new land. One factor that separated them from their co-religionists, as well as from the larger community, was language. They used Yiddish not only at home and in the synagogue, but in business when dealing with their own **landslayt** (compatriots from Eastern Europe). Another factor was status. They were content to be with their own people — to have limited social contact with non-Jews — because they based status less on economic success and civic prominence than on old world concepts such as **yikhes** (family status and pride), piety, and **tzedakah** (charitable acts).

Each congregation, Mount Zion and Sons of Jacob, then, was in effect its own community. And each may have remained so for an unforeseen period of time if events had not occurred thousands of miles away that had a direct influence on Jewish life in Saint Paul.

In March 1881, revolutionaries in Russia assassinated Czar Alexander II and the foreign press began to hint darkly at a "secret Jewish conspiracy." Allegedly spontaneous pogroms exploded throughout the Pale of Settlement (where Russian Jews were confined by laws of 1795 and 1835), decimating Jewish communities while authorities looked on. To quote one author, "a shudder of fear passed through the Jewish community of the Pale," a shudder that propelled large numbers of Jews to flee with little more than their lives and a few bare necessities. One place where many sought refuge was America, the "Golden Medina." Jewish immigration offices, often staffed and funded by wealthy German Jewish philanthropists, were set up throughout Europe to assist what became an avalanche of Jewish refugees. Because these offices were forced to work quickly, they often did not have time to make arrangements with the communities that received the needy Jews. Saint Paul was one case in point.

On July 14, 1882, a train arrived in Saint Paul carrying among its passengers two hundred dazed and impoverished Russian Jewish refugees. The city's Jewish residents had not been forewarned, so they were unprepared to provide for these desperate people, but once alerted to the situation, they responded quickly and generously. The refugees almost equaled in number those Jews residing in Saint Paul, but the two congregations, Mount Zion and Sons of Jacob, set aside their differences and united to help the refugees. As the **Saint Paul Globe** proclaimed in an article on July 17, 1882: "They [the refugees] are cared [for] by [the] Samaritans of their race...." The articles goes on to describe the impoverished state of the two hundred and the attempts by the Jewish community to provide them with clothes, food, and, most important, jobs. None of the refugees spoke English, but most of the men claimed to be skilled craftsmen. Twenty-two men were immediately found jobs: fourteen were sent to Cable, Wisconsin to work on the railroad and eight others went to work on Minnesota farms. Eight families were found homes in Saint Paul, and six men were given jobs in local restaurants and tailor shops.

This trainload of refugees transformed the city's Jewish community. By being the first of many trainloads and boatloads of Eastern European Jewish immigrants to settle in Saint Paul, it redefined the relationship between the Mount Zion and Sons of Jacob congregations and in so doing redefined the whole character of Jewish community in Saint Paul. The new arrivals thus contributed



**West Side Flats, ca 1930. Photograph includes B'nai Zion Synagogue, B'nai Israel Synagogue, "Litvak" Synagogue, Agudas Achim Synagogue, Neighborhood House, Lafayette School, Saint Paul Hebrew Institute and Sheltering Home.**

new, brilliant threads to Joseph's coat. As each thread was worked in, others were in the offing ready to challenge the community's resolve to weave a whole cloth.

## Growth and Transformation

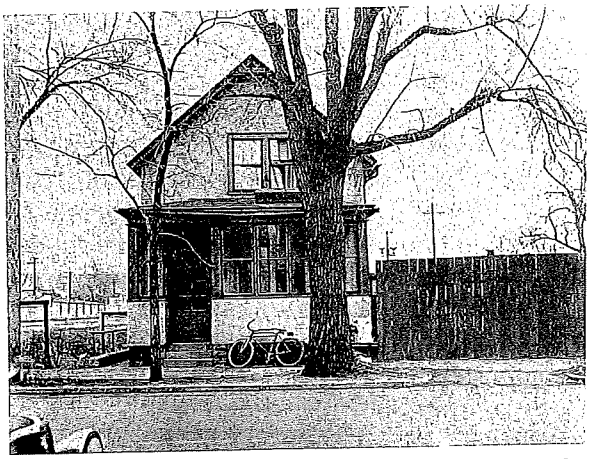
By 1885, a sizable number of Eastern European Jews had immigrated to Saint Paul. They joined with numerous other immigrants who flocked to the city to more than double Saint Paul's population of 80,000 in 1880 to 163,065 in 1890, and brought the number of Jews in the community to 3,500 (2.1% of the total population) by the latter date.

Because property was too expensive, the new Jewish immigrants did not settle in the Capitol Hill area with the established German and Eastern European Jews. Another section of the city had to be found that had cheap, affordable housing. The place selected was the "Flats" on the lower West Side, directly across the river from downtown. Because of recurrent flooding, landowners built here only the cheapest of houses, which were rented to impoverished people. The first residents were French Canadian voyageurs who settled in the area in 1851. They were followed by Irish and German immigrants who arrived in the 1860s. As soon as these groups were economically able they moved to better quarters on the higher terraces on

**Robert Street Bridge, 1896. Looking at flooded West Side Flats.** ***From the Collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.***

the West Side or elsewhere in the city, leaving their ramshackle houses for the next influx of immigrants. Now, beginning in the 1880s, it was the Jewish immigrants' turn to occupy this already destitute area.

And poor it was. Many of the Jewish immigrants were small merchants, including grocers, butchers, rag pickers, and junk dealers, and had their business in their homes and yards. Others were laborers, of whom a number walked across the bridge from the Flats to work daily in the city's tailoring shops and other light industries loc on the eastern fringes of downtown. A recollec of a long-time director of Neighborhood Ho the first settlement house in Saint Paul, origir located on the West Side, reinforces this imag the Flats. The director recalled how impressec was with the tidiness of the interiors of the Je



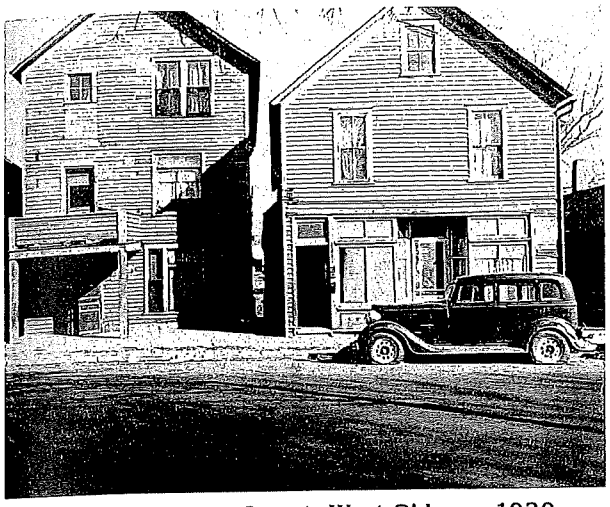
**West Side Flats. House with adjoining scrapyard.**

**West Side Flats. View of scrapyard.**

homes in the area, but found the exteriors another story. Unpaved, frequently floode roads often were mired in mud. Junk dealer ally stored their scrap in their back yards, be they could not afford to rent separate yards

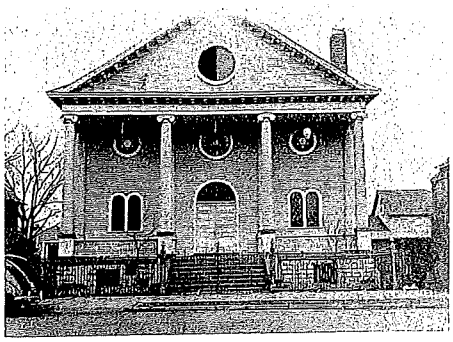
In spite of the area's poverty and bleak

> *"... many junk peddlers ... many grocery stores ... and we were all happy. ... I didn't know why we didn't know there was a Summit Avenue to make us unhappy.* 9



**Houses on State Street, West Side, ca 1930.**

scape, the Jewish immigrants who populated the Flats were able to imbue it with a special quality of life that still elicits nostalgic memories from its former residents and resonates in the writing of William Hoffman, the West Side's chronicler. This quality of life derived, in part, from the rich cultures the immigrants transplanted into the West Side. The established German-speaking Jewish community tended to see their new co-religionists as all Yiddish-Russian. In fact, the latter population was composed of numerous national groups, including Russian, Polish, Rumanian, and Lithuanian, and shared Yiddish as a lingua franca. Each group had its own traditions that it maintained through a welter of religious, philanthropic, political, social, and cultural organizations that catered to its specific needs. For example, a majority of the West Side Jews were strictly Orthodox, anchoring their lives in their religion. Yet, like earlier Jewish settlers in Saint Paul, they could not agree on the kind of orthodoxy to practice. Sons of Jacob proved to be "too Polish" for many, particularly those from areas of Russia and Rumania, so each group established its own **shul.** One of the first was Sons of Zion, founded by Russian immigrants in the early 1880s. By the 1890s at least four other Orthodox congregations were on the West Side, each true to the customs and traditions of its congregants.



**Sons of Zion Congregation, ca 1930. Located on State Street, West Side.**

The steadily increasing Eastern European Jewish population on the West Side influenced all areas of Jewish life in Saint Paul. The German Jews, heretofore the majority in numbers and the more visible and accepted within the community at large, shared in the city's prosperity at the end of the nineteenth century. Chamber of Commerce publications describe various successful enterprises of the day in Saint Paul, including several businesses owned by German Jews. Among these was Mannheimer Brothers' Drygoods. Located on the corner of Third and Minnesota and called the "Marshall Fields of Saint Paul," Mannheimer's employed some two hundred people, including a number of Jewish tailors living on the West Side. Now, the Jewish "old stock" of the city found themselves not only outnumbered but also being identified — to their surprise — with the new Jewish immigrants. Incredible as it must have seemed to the German group, many Gentiles saw Jews as all the same.

**View in main floor Mannheimer Bros. Dry Goods, 1888. (From *The Northwest Magazine,* February, 1888, p. 30). *From the Collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.***

The German Jews decided to take steps to disassociate themselves from the recent immigrants, without abjuring their charitable responsibility to provide them with material assistance. These steps included maintaining strict social separation, even from the established Eastern European Jewish community, and distancing themselves further through the religious traditions they observed. Mount Zion had been reforming its liturgy along moderate lines. Now it adopted the radical American **minhag** of the Reform Movement, which dramatically separated it ritually from the newcomers. Perhaps the step that had the greatest impact on the immigrants was an attempt by the German Jews to hasten their adaptation to Ameri-

Mannheimer Store Building, 107 E. Sixth Street, March 23, 1897. *From the Collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.*

can life. Through Americanization classes and other programs that they sponsored and staffed, the German Jewish community sought to make the immigrants less visibly foreign to the larger community.

As the Orthodox immigrant community became increasingly self-sufficient, it interacted more with the German Reform community. Such interaction, however, did little to foster better relations between the two groups: since it was initiated by the Reform community to attract only those Eastern European Jews who had become successful and acculturated, it came at the expense of the Orthodox community. As early as the 1890s, in response to the exclusiveness of all-German Jewish social clubs, the daughter of Mount Zion's rabbi formed a literary society that "any Jewish lady or gentleman could join." By 1895 the society had seventy-five members, but it is not known how many were of Eastern European background. In 1900 the first B'nai B'rith Lodge in Minnesota, #157, founded in 1871 and with almost exclusive membership from Mount Zion, saw itself in need of new life and opened its doors to Eastern European Jews. Lodge #396, which Eastern European Jews had established because of the older lodge's exclusivity, lost members to #157 and disbanded.

As they prospered, the Orthodox Eastern European immigrants also left the West Side. Starting with a steady trickle around 1900, some moved into the adjacent West Side "Hills," where they

In Grandfather's backyard near State Capitol, ca 1915.
*Courtesy Bessie Nilva Frisch.*

were protected from flooding; others crossed the Mississippi to "Lowertown," between Tenth and Fourteenth Streets. The West Side, however, did not empty of Jewish residents. New immigrants continued to settle there through 1924, when federal restrictions curtailed immigration to the United States. As late as 1927, over 30% of Saint Paul's Jewish population lived in this area of the city.

The older German elements of the Saint Paul Jewish community saw the immigrants' movement into Lowertown as a sign that they themselves should move. It may have been all right to have "Russian" Jews in the same B'nai B'rith Lodge, but it was another matter to have them as neighbors. In an effort to physically separate themselves from them, Saint Paul's established Jewry moved up to the Hill District and west to Dayton and Summit Avenues, with a few settling east of Lexington Avenue. To visibly symbolize its separation from the Orthodox community, Mount Zion erected a new Temple on the "Hill," building in 1903 in the heart of an upper-class church neighborhood at Avon and Holly.

This attempt at separation was short-lived. Within a decade members of the Orthodox community began settling in the Dayton-Summit area. Their move to the Hill reflected a growing Americanization, one form of which was a reexamination of Orthodox Judaism, especially by the younger generation. Although most Eastern European Jews were unwilling to accept the reforms of Mount Zion, some were attracted to the tenets of the newly formed Conservative Movement. Hence, in 1912 Saint Paul's first Conservative congregation was founded, Temple of Aaron. In 1916, the congregation built its first synagogue at Ashland and Grotto, two blocks from Mount Zion. With the establishment of a Conservative synagogue, another bright thread was added to Saint Paul Jewry's multicolored coat.

The shift to Lowertown by some of the more successful new immigrants also had an influence on the religious life of Saint Paul's Orthodox community. Synagogues on the West Side soon found themselves losing members, because congregants, refusing to ride on the Sabbath and High Holy Days, needed a place to worship within convenient walking distance of their homes. As a consequence, by 1910 three West Side congregations, Sons of Moses, Adath Yeshuran, and Sons of Abraham, joined the older Sons of Jacob in Lowertown, purchasing and remodeling abandoned churches for synagogues and hiring one rabbi between them, Joseph Hurvitz. Meanwhile, recent arrivals on the West Side formed their own congregations to replace those that had left and engaged a religious leader of their own, Rabbi Herman Simon.

The era ended just as it began, with a distant event affecting Saint Paul's Jewish residents. However, whereas the arrival of Eastern European refugees challenged the city's Jewish community to grow and transform itself, making positive use of its greater diversity, this event forced it to reconsider that diversity in a somber light.

On a Sunday morning, June 28, 1914, in the city of Sarajevo, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, Francis Ferdinand, and his wife were assassinated by Serbian nationals. It was the "shot heard around the world" and precipitated World War I. Reverberations of the assassination reached Minnesota, taking the form of increasing xenophobia. The loyalties of many non-English-speaking immigrants were questioned, including those of Eastern European Jews, but especially individuals of German heritage. Seemingly overnight, it was no longer advantageous for a Jew to be a German.

On April 16, 1917, the Minnesota legislature, in what was viewed as a patriotic gesture, created the Commission of Public Safety, charging it with the responsibility to protect life and property and to aid in the prosecution of the war. Commission members were given sweeping powers that they used to harass immigrants. Reports of the commission, on file in the archives of the Minnesota Historical Society, describe "secret" meetings and other suspicious acts by Minnesota Jews, including some residing in Saint Paul.

Although membership at Mount Zion grew gradually during the war years, from 168 in 1912 to 195 by 1921, actual attendance at services and meetings declined. This inactivity may have stemmed from the congregation's effort to keep a low profile, avoiding involvement in communal, political, and even philanthropic endeavors for fear of controversy. Exacerbating the situation was the Temple's rabbi of many years, Isaac L. Rypins, a pacifist who did not see the German side of the

> *"Summit Avenue was a street of churches and there was no reason why Mount Zion shouldn't have its sign right along with all the other churches."*

conflict as "totally evil" and who gave voice to his controversial views in his weekly sermons. The congregation supported its rabbi until 1921. Then, noting political "unrest" in the general community following the war, it censured Rypins for continuing to air his views on the war from the pulpit. The rabbi submitted his resignation, which was accepted with "deep regret."

### Toward Common Ground

The period following the First World War brought the greatest change to the Saint Paul Jewish community since Eastern Europeans immigrated en masse beginning in the 1880s. Jewry in the city was still divided — especially in the social realm — into distinct subgroups, as witnessed in an observation by Phillip Kleinman, a rabbi at Temple of Aaron, who described the local Jewish population in 1917 as composed of three layers, "German Jews, Russian and Polish, in that order." But a dramatic realignment and reconstitution of the community was in the offing. For instance, German Jews, still recovering from the shattering effects of the war, relinquished the control they had had heretofore over many of the major Jewish organizations in the city. This situation may have occurred regardless of the war, as many members of the much larger Eastern European Jewish community had become sufficiently acculturated and prosperous to vie with the Germans for positions of leadership. Moreover, as events transpired, Saint Paul Jewry discovered that it had more in common ideologically than it had known previously.

One factor, according to Rabbi Kleinman, that contributed to greater "fusion" within the city's Jewish community at this time was Zionism. But a history of this movement in Saint Paul would indicate otherwise. Some Saint Paul Jews had indeed fervently supported Zionism since the convocation of the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897. These were young Eastern European immigrants who the same year as the Congress established the first young Zionists group in the city and a subsequent group in 1898. More general interest in Palestine developed later. Following the outbreak of World War I and the news of the desperate plight of Jewry in war-torn Europe, the number and kind of Zionist organizations burgeoned. Eventually Saint Paul had groups and individuals representing every Zionist philosophy, including one congregant of Mount Zion who was a member of the Territorialist organization of Israel Zangwill. Most Reform Jews in the city, however, taking their lead from their rabbi, did not share this zeal toward Zionism. Rabbi Rypins, unlike his Reform counterpart in Minneapolis, Rabbi Samuel Deinard, was openly anti-Zionist. He and his congregants relented somewhat following the Balfour Declaration, helping raise monies for the Jewish National Fund and **Keren Hayesod,** but the names of Reform Jews rarely appeared on the membership lists of Saint Paul's Zionist organizations until after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

What did create more common ground among Saint Paul Jewry after World War I was anti-Semitism. A 1981 study of the city's Jewish population revealed that those in the sixty or older category identified anti-Semitism as the most important problem facing the Jewish community. Other age groups viewed other problems, apathy and intermarriage, as primary. Why this emphasis on anti-Semitism by the community's older members? Certainly, memories of the Holocaust are one reason, but these individuals also are the ones who still recall certain local episodes of discrimination after World War I that shaped their lives.

The celebration of the Balfour Declaration, Zionism, and the funds raised for Jewish war sufferers attracted attention from Saint Paul's Christian community, not all positive. There were those who saw such political activism by the city's Jewish population, in tandem with its economic success, as a threat. This situation paralleled events happening elsewhere in the United States, where economic problems and social and political unrest were being blamed on "foreigners," a euphemism for anyone who was not white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant. One by-product of this attitude was that discrimination against Jews in Saint Paul, historically of a more genteel and subtle character especially when compared with the discrimination in Minneapolis, was transformed into overt acts of anti-Semitism.

During the early years of Saint Paul, Jews moved relatively easily within the community at large yet were not accepted completely. Reflecting on those early years, a member of the pioneer Jewish community recalls limited "intermingling with Gentiles" and speaks of anti-Semitism on a "social level," although she herself never experienced any. Prestigious social clubs had Jewish members, but quotas were not unknown, and certain economic opportunities were partially closed to Jews. But what was most important to the local Jewish community was that they perceived themselves as being accepted by their neighbors. This attitude was reconsidered in the years following the First World War.

During the 1920s and 30s Saint Paul had its share of anti-Semitic extremist groups. In 1924 the city's Ku Klux Klan, claiming that it had 2,500

members and that these members included many city and county officials, launched a vicious anti-Jewish, anti-Catholic propaganda campaign. Although the Klan never achieved the success it hoped for, its efforts were indicative of a change in attitude by some within Saint Paul's Christian community toward their Jewish neighbors. In the 1930s the Klan was replaced by two other anti-Semitic groups that were even more threatening in that they represented a broader spectrum of the general community than the Klan; these were the Silver Shirts, who claimed 1,200 local members in 1936, and the Christian Front, an organization headed nationally by Father Coughlin. These groups were particularly successful in the area of political anti-Semitism during the 1938 Minnesota gubernatorial election.

Between the First and Second World Wars, anti-Semitism also affected housing for Jews in Saint Paul. Newspaper advertisements for apartments and homes often openly stated "no Jews." Through protests voiced to editors, these ads were eventually discontinued, but until open housing laws were passed in the 1950s, most suburbs and many residential areas within Saint Paul restricted home ownership by "nongentiles."

One positive outcome of this heightened discrimination was that Jews of all persuasions in Saint Paul rallied to fight bigotry in the community. In the words of one Jewish resident of the city who was writing in 1907 but who could just as well have been writing after World War I:

> The Jews of Saint Paul are a peculiar people ... despite the fact there are many congregations each pulling in its own direction, each congregation having its membership composed of former inhabitants of a particular country, when united action is necessary for the common good of Israel, there is no sect, no division, but a united Saint Paul Jewry.

Besides anti-Semitism, another situation that created common ground among the city's Jewish population during this period was the overall social climate of the 1930s. The Depression, recurring outbreaks of anti-Jewish activity at home, and the increasingly bleak news regarding the fate of European Jewry, all contributed to a decade of despair and tragedy ... and challenge. For the Jewish community, in response to adversity, unified and integrated its disparate groups and resources as it never had before. Emerging from this collective effort was the foundation of the UJFC. Not without conflict and effort, Saint Paul Jewry managed to put into place by the end of the decade the groundwork for the federated social welfare system it has employed so effectively in the postwar era.

### World War II and Beyond

Over the last four decades, the Saint Paul Jewish community has continued to evolve, partly as a consequence of new developments, but also because of the continued effect of old trends and patterns.

A westward, and subsequently southward, exodus from the downtown and its environs to new and better housing has been maintained, successive groups of Jewish immigrants and their descendants following in the footsteps of earlier groups. Jewish outmigration from the West Side was slowed by the Depression, yet by 1947 only 12% of Saint Paul's Jewish population lived in the area, whereas the majority — 65% — resided in the Hill and Midway districts and 27% were located in Highland Park. Within ten years 80% of the city's Jewry lived in Hill-Midway and Highland, 44% in the former area and 43% in the latter. In 1981 the figure for Highland had climbed to 65%, giving that neighborhood the highest concentration of Jewish residents in the Twin Cities, but 15% had recrossed the Mississippi, locating primarily in Mendota.

Two key factors that fostered this residential mobility were continued economic advancement and recurring discrimination in housing. Taking advantage of expanded opportunities in higher education after World War II, many young Jewish adults in Saint Paul sought employment in white-collar fields, moving away from the small neighborhood merchant and laboring occupations of the immigrant generation. By 1981, 35% of the local Jewish community had achieved a college education or better and 85% held white-collar jobs.

A recent study of Twin City neighborhoods supports the theory that discrimination has influenced Jewish residential patterns in Saint Paul since the Second World War. It suggests that Highland Park emerged as a "Jewish" neighborhood because other neighborhoods in the city were less open to Jews. According to this source, after the war when returning servicemen along with other members of the Jewish community were looking for new places in which to live, "nongentile" clauses in real estate contracts coupled with "other expressions of anti-Semitism in other new communities being developed in and around Saint Paul ... made the voluntary community of Highland Park very attractive."

As in earlier periods in its history, during the

postwar era the Jewish community of Saint Paul also has provided a sanctuary for Jewish refugees fleeing hostile conditions in Europe. Better prepared to receive individuals in distress than it had been in the past, Saint Paul Jewry, through the UJFC and its beneficiary agencies, resettled in the late 1940s and 50s over six hundred Holocaust survivors. Later, in the 1970s, it provided a home for more than three hundred Soviet Jews. With the arrival of these new immigrants, the community added more new threads to its coat — threads that at times were difficult to interweave into the fabric, but at last became part of the whole.

This influx of new members into the community came at a time when Saint Paul Jewry began experiencing what is perhaps its most dramatic change in recent years, a gradual but real decline in its population. In1930, 13,500 Jews lived in the city, making up 5% of the total population. In 1940, the Jewish population increased to 14,000, but its share of the total population decreased to 4.9%, the first significant demographic decline in the ninety-year history of Saint Paul Jewry and a portent of the future. The 1950 census indicated a further loss: the number of Jews now stood at approximately 12,000 and comprised 3.8% of Saint Paul's total population, a smaller percentage than it represented thirty years before. Between 1960 and 1970 the number of Jewish residents stabilized at around 10,500 before declining yet further, to approximately 6,000 to 7,500 in 1980. In the latter year Jews made up 2.5% of the Saint Paul population. Local Jewish leaders, as cited in a 1971 community study, attribute this postwar population loss in part to an outmigration stemming from a negative view of Saint Paul; they felt that until recently the city had not been generally considered the kind of attractive, progressive area in which people like to lay down roots. From 1948 to 1957 alone the number of Jewish families in Saint Paul decreased some 12%.

Matching the population decline has been a "graying" of the local Jewish population. In 1957, 11% of the city's Jewry, some 850 to 900 individuals, were 65 years of age or older. By 1981 this figure had climbed to 21%, compared with 11.5% for the population of Ramsey County as a whole.

Faced with these developments in its demography, the Saint Paul Jewish community took steps to further unify and integrate itself. In community affairs, consolidation and cooperation in the form of organizational mergers and joint enterprise became imperative, given the diminished population and resource base. Social unification was fostered, too. Dividing lines within the Jewish community blurred as the various immigrant groups and their descendants became more assimilated and Americanized (by 1970 only 23% Saint Paul Jews claimed Yiddish as their moth tongue) and intramarried with one another.

Shifts within the religious composition of Sa Paul Jewry at this time illustrate these poi graphically. In 1900, Saint Paul Jews supported least six formal congregations, in 1934, at le thirteen. But in 1981, through consolidation, th maintained four houses of worship. (In 1984, fifth, the New Conservative Synagogue, was est lished.) Moveover, local religious affiliation mov away dramatically from old world Judaism tc position of accommodation with religious life contemporary America. In 1900 the majority the Saint Paul Jewish community practiced clas cal Judaism, belonging to the various Orthod congregations organized largely along natio lines. However, by 1960 48% of the local affiliat Jewish population were members of the Cons vative Movement, having joined Temple of Aar and 21% were Reform, being members of Mo Zion. In 1981 these figures were 60% and 27 respectively.

Nevertheless, the Jews of Saint Paul over t last several decades probably realized the great impetus for unification and integration not fr sources inside but outside the community three in particular, the Second World War its the Holocaust, and the founding of the State Israel. The bond of patriotism to the Unit States, expressed through support of the war fort abroad and at home in the form of donation monies, material, and volunteer service in civili programs, unified Saint Paul Jewry even mo The searing experience of the Holocaust dem strated to them that they could prevent the rep tion of such a blasphemous event only throug heightened awareness of the varied manifes tions of anti-Semitism and through greater a swifter unified action. In contrast, the establi ment of the State of Israel provided an uplift sense of shared purpose. The city's Jewish re dents have worked long and hard, offering th funds, expertise, and hearts, to address the Jew

*"I started kosher with four sets of dishes ... and gradually they merged, I don't know what happened, but they all merged."*

state's ongoing needs, as well as to assist it in time of crisis like the 1967 and 1973 wars.

In the late 1940s W. Gunther Plaut, the rabbi at Mount Zion, said of his congregants:

> with rare exceptions the old scars had healed and the congregation was now perfectly mixed between the old and new, between Eastern and Western Europeans ... the divisions of the past ... no longer mattered.

Some overstatement notwithstanding, Rabbi Plaut's observations reflect a truth not only about Mount Zion but Saint Paul Jewry as a whole in the postwar period: they have achieved greater community than in any time in their past.

What, then, is the state of the Saint Paul Jewish community in 1985? With all its strides toward unity, the community remains remarkably diverse: Recent evidence suggests an upswing in the number of young to balance the aging of the population. A small but real renaissance seems to be occurring in Orthodox practice and education, as witnessed by the establishment of Adath Israel congregation and the Merkos-Lubavitch Center with its varied programs, offsetting the mainstreaming tendencies of the past several decades. At the same time, it is estimated that as much as 35% of Saint Paul Jews remain unaffiliated. A 1981 study speaks of recent interest among local Jews to settle north of the Highland area, including the northern suburbs. And although prosperity has come to Jews in Saint Paul, it has not reached the entire Jewish population. Approximately 24% of the city's Jewish households were below the median household income in Saint Paul in 1980.

Saint Paul Jewry proudly wears its coat of many colors. Like Joseph's coat, the Saint Paul Jewish community consists of many bright but individual threads of color, each making a contribution to its vibrancy and durability. The threads were not always easily woven into a whole cloth, but with persistence and dedication, Saint Paul Jewry has managed to create a vital community that has respected and retained its diversity while achieving unity.

# CHAPTER 2

# The United Jewish Fund and Council and Jewish Social Welfare in Saint Paul: A Perspective

## Introduction

Saint Paul Jewry has continually followed a philosophy that transcends the individual and individual needs, and concerns itself with community and communal needs. From the founding of Mount Zion, through the emergence of consensus in support of Zionism, to the resettlement of Soviet refugees, the city's Jewish population has attempted to create from its varied resources — human and material — a group consciousness and life rooted in a shared understanding of and commitment to being Jewish. As a local rabbi expressed it in 1929,

> At no time can the individual Jew consider his own welfare without establishing the relationship between himself and his fellow Jews ... even ... on [the] solemn holidays when we concentrate upon our personal ills and failings, we relate them to those of Israel ... when we recite the long confessional on Yom Kippur we do not employ the first person singular but the first person plural. The Jew and the Jewish people are one and indissoluble.

The definition of the nature and spirit of community for Saint Paul Jews has changed with time. Historically, they have based their mutual association and welfare on the belief that Jewish "community supplements that which the individual Jew cannot do for himself." But at different times they have seen fit to supplement different areas of life, among them religion; education; the needs of the elderly, the sick, and the poor; recreation; culture; and work. Moreover, at different times they have used different approaches and methods — most recently, federated social welfare under the auspices of the United Jewish Fund and Council and its beneficiary agencies — to provide such supplementation.

## Early Adjustments

During the first four decades of Jewish life in Saint Paul, 1840-1880, the Jewish community went through a process of adjustment and adaptation. Initially made up of immigrants who came first from Germany and later from Eastern Europe, the city's Jewish population needed to accommodate ideas and traditions about community life that they had brought with them from the Old World. Long-standing social arrangements, including concepts and practices related to group welfare and mutual assistance, had to be reexamined. Some customs were found wanting and were discarded. Others were kept whole or revised. In time, such reexamination became a hallmark of community life among Saint Paul Jews, as each wave of immigrants in turn had to make this adjustment.

Perhaps the area of community involving the most major changes was the nature of religious association in Europe and the United States. Over the centuries, Europeans had treated Jews as a people apart. In the worst of times, Jews were considered personae non gratae and either expelled — from Portugal in 1496, for example, or from Austria in 1420 — or persecuted — in Rumania in the seventeenth century, for instance, or in Italy in the thirteenth century. In the best of times they were tolerated, permitted to reside within a state's borders but made the object of legal discrimination and harassment.

In the nineteenth century, Jews in many places in Europe found themselves in the latter situation, typically denied opportunities to participate fully in society. Indeed, full citizenship, with freedom from legal restrictions, still was not a reality for a large portion of European Jewry when Jews began settling in Saint Paul. Although realized in France in 1791, it was achieved as late as 1871 in Germany and 1879 in England (the century closed without it becoming a reality in Russia or Poland).

Such disenfranchisement applied to the Jewish community as well as to the Jewish individual; the Jewish population was deemed a distinct social unit within the larger society and was required to maintain its own communal structure. Variously known as a **kehillah** or **kahal** and shaped by local conditions, this "community within a community" was usually invested by the "host" society with the right to self-government, the power to tax, and the authority to keep an independent judiciary. It had

institutions and services to meet Jewish religious, educational, legal, cultural, medical, social, economic, and philanthropic needs. More important, the **kahal** was usually in a position to make individuals obey its edicts and participate in its work and activities, since membership often was mandatory. Withdrawal from the Jewish community in Prussia, for example, was not legal until 1876, and in Belgium, not until 1892.

From the very beginning, Jewish patterns of association in Saint Paul differed greatly from those in Europe. Because religious practice and affiliation in the United States was voluntary, the city's Jewish population was not required to develop a separate "corporate" communal structure such as the **kehillah** to meet their group needs. How they chose to be Jewish — and, more significantly, if they chose to be Jewish — was their own affair.

This departure from established ways had immediate and profound implications for Jewish community in Saint Paul. For instance, the definition of Jewishness and one's responsibility to fellow Jews was problematic. In Europe, Jews were identified by congregational affiliation. The corporate Jewish community supported the congregations, which historically had been Orthodox, but which, by the end of the nineteenth century, with the rise of liberal Judaism were non-Orthodox as well. However, circumstances in Saint Paul were quite different from those in Europe. In the absence of a corporate communal umbrella, the diverse religious life of the early Jewish settlers presented real difficulties from the standpoint of community organization. Records of Mount Zion from the period illustrate this point well.

By the 1870s, Mount Zion was functioning as a Jewish community in miniature. It offered nearly everything an individual required to live Jewishly — religious education, which had been mandated by its original bylaws, provisions for **kashruth** through a **shochet** (the Temple's first ritual slaughterer appears to have been the first Jewish functionary in Saint Paul), spiritual leadership through a rabbi, and hallowed ground for burial.

But who was eligible for these services was another question. Was eligibility to be limited to Mount Zion congregants? Or was it to be extended to nonmembers? To those who resided in Saint Paul but belonged to Ahabath Achim or, later, to Sons of Jacob? To those who lived in Saint Paul but were unaffiliated? To Jews living elsewhere in the vicinity? Mount Zion took more than one tack in resolving these concerns. On the one hand, it opened its cemetery not only to co-religionists from Ahabath Achim but to Jewry throughout Minnesota. On the other hand, in the 1860s it required its rabbi to obtain the permission of the congregation before he could "render his service to outsiders." Also in the 1870s, Mount Zion took a similar hard line regarding the service of its **shochet:** "members of the congregation paid $6 per year ... for the privilege of buying the meat from the temple's official butcher. Nonmembers had to pay $24 per year."

Another implication that the departure from a **kehillah** structure had for the Jewish community in Saint Paul can be seen in the ways that the first Jewish settlers supported efforts at mutual aid. In Europe, circumstances encouraged Jewish communal stability. Laws centuries old, restricting Jews to certain districts, created a corporate community that organized Jewish life and provided a stable population. In Saint Paul, the Jewish population was more fluid, making organization difficult. Between 1875 and 1879 Sons of Jacob had at least three rabbis. Economics played a leading role in this residential mobility. Many people left Saint Paul to escape hard times; the Panic of 1857, for instance, cut the city's population in half from 12,000 to 6,000. Others moved on to pursue richer opportunities elsewhere, including, according to one local observer, that "new city" across the river, starting in the 1870s.

Moreover, the lack of sanctioned authority created a power vacuum in early Jewish community in Saint Paul. Controlling the behavior of the individual was difficult without a **kehillah** type structure. As early as the 1850s Mount Zion, it was reported, "simply existed." Suffering from poor attendance, the Temple stagnated, steps it took to remediate the situation, including fines, producing mixed results.

## Anxiety and Americanization

The first four decades of Jewish community in Saint Paul were marked by structural change — the emergence of an organized community with patterns of behavior different from those traditional to Europe. The community was shaped as well by an accompanying psychological reorientation. The American principles of the separation of church and state and the equality of established religions, along with the freedom of choice of religion, lowered barriers that long restricted Jewish participation in European life. These principles invited a reassessment of Jewish life in relation to that of the larger society. But the new viewpoint were to be severely tested during the next four decades of Jewish community in Saint Paul, 1880–1920, through the arrival of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe.

In reacting to the openness of life in America

some early Jews in Saint Paul assimilated. Others sought to combine their Jewish heritage with their new identities as Americans. Mount Zion's congregants, in particular, were comfortable functioning in their socioeconomic class as Jews outside the Jewish community; they became the community's representatives. Indeed, the history of Jewish community relations in Saint Paul may be traced to the work of these German Jews. In the 1860s the Temple's rabbi campaigned in the local press in opposition to a movement to constitutionally establish Christianity as the national religion, at one point urging "everyone of whatever nationality to work against this effort to destroy civil and religious freedom in [the United States]." In the 1870s his successor spoke at churches throughout the state, explaining and interpreting Judaism and Jewish life. Even the congregants of Sons of Jacob, although more "European" in their interaction with the general population, acknowledged the newness of their circumstances: as reported in the **Saint Paul and Minneapolis Pioneer Press,** at the dedication of the new Sons of Jacob synagogue in 1879, "the building ... was entirely filled by an attentive congregation, in which were several Christians."

One area in which the early Jewish settlers of Saint Paul redefined their relations with the greater community was philanthropy. Among themselves they followed the traditional Jewish precepts of giving **tzedakah;** these time-honored customs were put into practice soon after their arrival, as some Jewish needy were to be found in Saint Paul at an early date — by 1857, according to one local journalist. Mount Zion and, it appears, Sons of Jacob each had a **hebrah kaddishah,** which afforded free burial to the indigent. Mount Zion also began in 1871 what seems to have been the first Jewish alms-dispensing organization in Saint Paul, the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society. Thus, as a rabbi in the community stated in 1879, "while some difference ... exist[s] among Israelites, they [are] none of them of vital importance; for ... all Israelites are brethren."

But with respect to philanthropy between Jews and others, the pioneer Jewish population of Saint Paul moved away from the accepted notions of the European Jewish community. Unlike their co-religionists in Europe, who generally heeded the biblical injunction against accepting aid from non-Jews unless it is unavoidable, they experimented with intergroup assistance. "Saint Paul," a local authority wrote in 1905, "has the earliest record of organized and systematic [community-wide] charitable work [in Minnesota]." As early as 1881, when the congregants of Mount Zion solicited funds from the larger Saint Paul community for a new synagogue, the city's Jewish population became a part of this record.

The later Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe represented a threat to these new relations between Jew and non-Jew. At least they did in the eyes of the established Jewish community of Saint Paul, especially the congregants of Mount Zion, who were pursuing these new relations most actively. Poor and visibly foreign, these refugees, through their religious orthodoxy, transplanted old world attitudes about the greater society to their new home. Jews who had fled Rumania, Bulgaria, Bohemia, Russia, and Poland for a better life in America jeopardized the better life that their established co-religionists had already created for themselves.

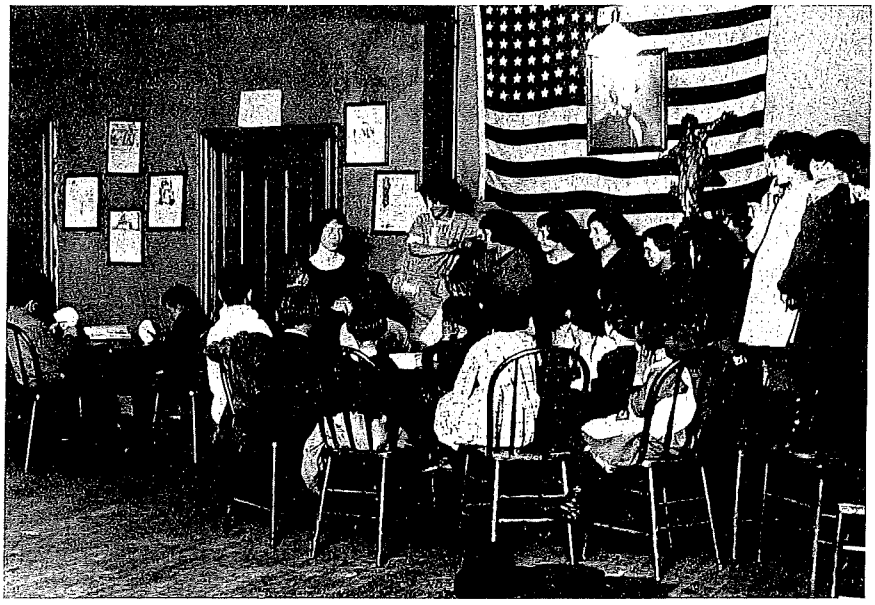
Saint Paul's organized Jewish community therefore faced a major challenge with the coming of the future residents of the West Side and Lowertown. They wanted to fulfill the responsibilities of **tzedakah** and at the same time to fulfill what they took to be their responsibilities to the general welfare of their adopted country by participating in intergroup ventures in mutual assistance. They were not alone in this task. Between 1880 and 1924 over two million Jews, most from Eastern Europe, immigrated to the United States, settling primarily in established Jewish communities in major cities on the east coast. Saint Paul received its newcomers in a fashion similar to that of Jewish communities elsewhere in the country: they offered a plan to make them presentable in their new land — Americanization.

What Americanization entailed was not a fixed idea. Its spirit and meaning changed with time and from individual to individual. To some, it meant transforming the refugees as quickly as possible into new Americans, with little regard to whether any part of their national, cultural, or traditionalist religious heritages were to survive the process. Conformity was the goal, and it was pursued in a paternalistic manner. Eastern European Jews were scorned for their difference. They were "lazy" and "crude" and needed to be "uplifted." To quote one Jewish leader in nineteenth-century Saint Paul:

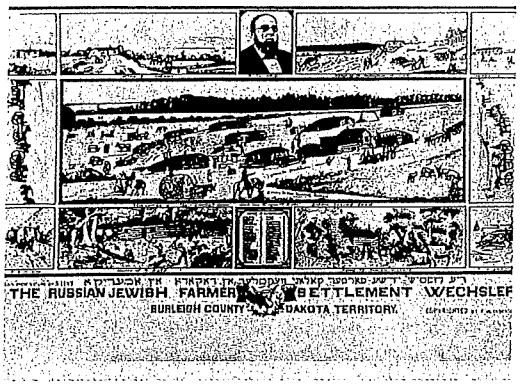
> [These refugees] are our kindred, and it is our duty to elevate them to a higher place to become good citizens of this country. Let nobody argue that we are not responsible or interested in their welfare ... [yet their ways] belong to past generations, for the spirit of the 19th century is not in the least comprehended, and genuine Judaism is not represented by them. [Their] congregations have no future in America.

Or Americanization meant making the refugees over into Americans without denying them the integrity of their heritage. The goal here was pluralism, creating "American citizens who respected their own and other people's traditions at the same time," and it was pursued with greater compassion and more benevolence, less "at arm's length and with quiet hostility."

In either case, from the perspective of the new arrival in the Jewish community, Americanization signaled change. Points of contact between the established Jewish community of Saint Paul and the new Jewish residents of the city, through which opportunities for such change came, were in two forms, "money plus men." During the decades around the turn of the century, the organized Jewish community funded and/or staffed a constellation of mutual assistance programs and services for the refugees. These included: employment bureaus; a summer facility at White Bear Lake "for tired Jewish mothers and children" (Sophie Wirth Camp); at least one day nursery for



**Class at Central Community House, 13th and Canada Streets, 1924.** ***From the Collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.***




**An illustrated poster describing life in the Weschsler colony, Dakota Territory, U.S.A., 1930s. Named after rabbi of Mount Zion Temple, 1878-1886. Keter Publishing House, Jerusalem.**

> *"... German Jews in general ... wanted to help — they had to help. ... They set up ... organizations that every Jewish community had for help."*

> *"But at the same time [German Jews] wanted to get them [Eastern European Jews] out of the sight of the rest of the American populace because [they] didn't want too much association with them."*

Jewish mothers who worked; several general relief organizations, four of which, the Jewish Relief Society (originally the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society), the Sisters of Peace, the **Bikur Cholim** Society, and the Hebrew Ladies Aid Society, joined forces in 1910 as Jewish Charities of Saint Paul; two neighborhood centers, Neighborhood House and Central Community House; and two agricultural colonies in North Dakota, Devil's Lake and Painted Woods (one way to manage and Americanize the Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe was to channel them away from cities wherein they had lived traditionally and from which they had developed their "urban" style of life).

Mount Zion and Sons of Jacob were responsible for some of these offerings; each, for example, supported the agricultural colonies. Others were under the auspices of fraternal organizations active in this period, including the B'nai B'rith and the National Council of Jewish Women. The local chapter of the latter, founded in 1894, operated Sophie Wirth Camp.

It is difficult to measure the effect Americanization had on the Saint Paul Jewish community. As discussed in Chapter One, those Jews residing in Lowertown and on the West Side became Americanized soon enough, in the words of a local newspaper, by the 1940s "push[ing] through the invisible barrier [including] Robert Street and ... the river to the end of the rainbow, whose symbol is Highland Park." But the role that the mutual assistance provided by the early Jewish settlers played in this cultural and geographic journey is difficult to determine. As late as 1916 a census taken by Neighborhood House concluded that fewer than thirty Jewish families on the West Side were "really" American.

So, too, what benefit the "givers" derived remains obscure. "Pluralist" and "conformist" alike were haunted by the same fear of losing their newly won status in the larger community, if Jews became a burden on local society or the target of widespread negative stereotyping. Thus, to prevent the former, the established community advocated "special care [be] given by Jewish societies to keep the city and its citizens from a penny of expense in caring for Jewish poor, homeless or refugees." Nevertheless, from the outset of the era, the Jewish old stock looked to the larger community for assistance in meeting the needs of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe. "In the cause of charity [they] issued a call" to their fellow citizens to help provide for the immediate needs of those refugees who detrained in Saint Paul in July 1882. Overburdened by the plight of the two hundred immigrants, they accepted from the city and private individuals aid in the form of monies, material, and housing.

To discourage the stereotyping of Jews, the organized community took such steps as setting up Jewish arbitration courts to prevent intra-Jewish disputes from being aired in public. Yet, prejudice was not unknown during the period, especially around World War I, or in the times of economic dislocation like the depression of 1893.

Perhaps two facts juxtaposed capture best the anxiety and ambiguity of this period. On the one hand, when the Community Chest was founded in Saint Paul in 1920, Jewish welfare organizations, including the Jewish Home for the Aged, which later became part of Sholom Home, Inc., became beneficiaries; moreover, the organization's first president came from the city's pioneer Jewish population. On the other hand, faced with growing xenophobia in the postwar years, Mount Zion in 1921 revised its bylaws to restrict temple membership to American citizens.

### Enterprise and Achievement

Broadly speaking, then, the agenda of the Jewish old stock of Saint Paul was to incorporate the newcomers of Lowertown and the West Side into the local Jewish community. As they attached "terms" to admitting them into the city's organized Jewish life, however, the older settlers received the refugees more than they welcomed them. At the same time, those Eastern European immigrants had an agenda of their own. They had their own expectations, their plans and dreams, and these often did not coincide with those of the city's established Jewish community. The eventual emergence of Conservative Judaism in Saint Paul illustrates this point well. In 1915 Temple of Aaron's first rabbi said of the Reform Jew: "His soul is empty."

Clearly, the newer settlers had their own perception of how to accommodate themselves and their Jewish heritage to American life. For some, this self-direction began with the very notion of emigrating. Some Eastern European Jewish refugees had come to Saint Paul under the auspices of resettlement agencies in Europe or the United States, and thus their arrival had probably less to do with personal preference than with staff decisions about which locale, thousands of miles away, was most conducive to Jewish settlement. But others immigrated to Saint Paul by choice. Some later arrivals went through a process of "chain" migration, selecting Saint Paul because others — family, friends, **landslayt** — who had come to the city had sent encouraging news back to the old country and, in some cases, had even sent funds for the journey. Often loans were ac-

quired from local self-help organizations founded by Eastern European Jewish fraternal and **landslayt** associations. As William Hoffman has written, "wives and families were brought over from the old country with $300 loans for steamship tickets, sometimes payable in five years by weekly payments at an interest rate of six percent."

For the Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe, the process of defining, assessing, and meeting one's own needs under new, trying, and what probably seemed strange circumstances became a fact of life once they reached Saint Paul. Where to live and where to work, and, for the majority, where to pray, since most of the Eastern European immigrants were Orthodox, were priorities. Later, other concerns, more social and cultural in nature, were addressed. Although the assistance that the established Jewish community offered helped meet both sets of concerns, it did so inadequately. The Eastern European refugees had to marshall their own resources. This they did largely through congregational affiliation.

The rich Jewish organizational life of Lowertown and the West Side in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was in part established along fraternal and **landsmanshaft** lines, the loan societies mentioned above being a case in point. Mostly, though, religious practice was the focus of community life in these sections. With at least eight Orthodox congregations by 1920, Saint Paul's Eastern European Jewry did not lack for houses of worship. "Virtually every block in the thickly settled parts of the West Side has a synagogue, many of them [having been] put up recently," wrote a local journalist in 1922. And each synagogue served as a nucleus for a host of organizations concerned with a variety of areas related to the congregants' welfare, including philanthropy, religious education, social activities, and burial. Unfortunately, it seems no complete list of these organizations was ever compiled. The list surely would have been formidable, judging from those given for the Sons of Zion in 1907. "The congregation ... maintains [besides a Hebrew school program] ... the Daughters of Zion, **Hachnosis Orchim,** [a] Young Men's Aid Society and a Ladies Aid Society...."

Thus, as it entered the post World War I years, Saint Paul Jewry was more divided than unified from the standpoint of community. It had a long record of Jewish communal achievement by the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, to which each successive wave of Jewish immigrants had contributed. This record, however, lacked a common vision of Jewish communal life, but reflected instead a multiplicity of visions, each the property of one of the various subgroups. multiplicity of programs and institutions l out this variety: According to a city directo 1916, Saint Paul supported fourteen cemete five being Jewish. Besides Mount Zion's, one ial ground belonged to Sons of Jacob and t were used by the latest arrivals to the local Je community, the refugees from Eastern Europ this time, approximately 10,000 Jews live Saint Paul, composing 4.4% of the city's population.

The situation changed dramatically over next two-and-a- half decades. For a number o sons — primarily those identified in Chapter including growing anti-Semitism, the econ and social dislocation of the Great Depres and the beginnings of Jewish outmigration Saint Paul — the city's Jewry could no longe ford such extreme diversity. Integration, cor dation, and unification became watchword the Jews of Saint Paul, starting in the 1920s. ever, they did not become realizations unti founding of the United Jewish Fund and Co in 1945. The philosophy of the UJFC was f ated Jewish social service. It became the central Jewish agency for raising funds from Paul Jews, allocating such funds to Jewish s service agencies in the city and elsewhere ir state, the nation, and overseas, and superv the expenditures, policies, and programmir those agencies in the local Jewish commu that received its monies. The UJFC represe the culmination of approximately a quarter century's worth of effort by Saint Paul Jew create of themselves a community.

Although an extended, concentrated attem better integrate the organized Jewish commu of Saint Paul began in the 1920s, sporadic ef in this direction had been made as early a late 1800s. In the last two decades of the teenth century several congregations on the

> *"Everywhere federations are functioning in developing strong Jewish communities . ... Will not Saint Paul resolve during the coming year to establish a Jewish Federation?"*
>
> **American Jewish World,** October 4, 1929

Side joined to form an Orthodox congregational union, and Saint Paul Jewry as a whole "experimented [unsuccessfully] with a central coordinating committee for refugee work." Also in the 1890s, and the opening decades of the 1900s, Jews on occasion came together to protest incidents in which Jews were persecuted in Europe, including the Kishinev pogroms in 1905, and to raise funds for the victims of such persecution.

But perhaps the greatest strides toward unifying Jewish communal activity in Saint Paul before the 1920s were taken by the city's Jewish Charities and by local Jewish work on behalf of the war effort. Details about the former organization, an antecedent of the Jewish Family Service (JFS), are in Chapter Six. By participating in war-related activities through the Twin Cities Council and, later, the local chapter of the National Jewish Welfare Board, including providing for the social, religious, and recreational needs of the Jewish soldiers stationed at Fort Snelling, the Jewish population of Saint Paul learned "a powerful lesson in the new art of intra-Jewish cooperation."

But the effects of these initial ventures at integrating Jewish communal life in Saint Paul were more in the realm of precedent than of results. The number of Jewish organizations did not decline or level off. Rather it increased, rising markedly, according to estimates, from sixteen in 1900 to thirty-one in 1907 to at least fifty in 1921.

At first the increased efforts at community integration in the postwar period were no more successful than the earlier ones. After the war, one Jewish organization in the city after another tried to foster unity. In 1924 alone the presidents of two Jewish groups in Saint Paul — B'nai B'rith and Aleph Beth, a downtown social club — said of their organizations, respectively, "The B'nai B'rith is the peace platform on which all Jews [in the city] can unite" and "[our] club [wants] to be the center of all communal activities pertaining to Jewish welfare" in Saint Paul. But through the 1920s and 30s, the number of Jewish organizations in the community kept climbing, reaching an estimated sixty in 1935 and eighty-seven in 1937. Difficulties that had nearly always been present in Saint Paul Jewry's organizational life but tolerated now became intolerable. On this enlarged scale, inefficiencies, duplication of services, and multiple solicitations of funds (as many as fifty a year, according to one long-time leader in the postwar Jewish community) were unacceptable to the city's Jewish population, especially in light of the economic and social problems it currently faced.

The turning point came in 1932 with the founding of the Council of Jewish Social Agencies. One of two parent organizations of the UJFC, the council was formed by a conference of local Jewish leaders convened in that same year by the Jewish Welfare Association (Jewish Charities of Saint Paul became the JWA in 1920). The council was established to deal directly with several of the paramount needs of organized Jewry in Saint Paul:

> The purpose of this Council shall be to provide a common meeting ground for all organizations devoted to the communal interests of Saint Paul Jewry ... to avoid duplication of effort ... [and] to formulate a united Jewish public opinion in the matter of growing needs of our community.

Although this precursor to the UJFC did not immediately transform Jewish organizational life — twenty-six Jewish groups in the city affiliated themselves with the council in 1933, twenty-seven in 1937, and twenty-eight in 1940 — it did make its mark. It brought greater coordination into the activities of Jewish organizations, and laid a groundwork for further cooperative activities. The following, taken from a list which appeared in the council's bulletin in December 1936, are representative of its achievements:

> It [the council] was responsible for coordinating Jewish transient problems during the years of the depression....
> It coordinated and centralized all Passover Relief so that distribution of funds is now made through a central clearing house....
> It has acted as advisor to local organizations on numerous occasions....
> It organized a community calendar to avoid duplication and conflict.

Without question, the council's greatest contribution to Jewish community was centralizing Jewish fund-raising. As early as 1934 the council, through a study, addressed this matter. One year later, largely as a result of its continued resolve, the United Jewish Fund of Saint Paul, the second antecedent organization of the UJFC, was established. Charged with instituting a single annual fund drive to meet the needs of Jewry in Saint Paul and co-religionists elsewhere in Minnesota, the United States, and overseas, the UJF had the same kind of mixed early success that the council had in its endeavors to unify programming. By 1938, the agency, through its annual drive, was serving the financial needs of approximately thirty Jewish groups in Saint Paul.

Into the 1940s the council and the UJF worked together as independent organizations, the one

concentrating on programming, the other focusing on funding. But difficulties were inherent in the system. According to a report produced in 1943 by a joint committee of the fund and council,

> The present arrangement whereby the United Jewish Fund serves as fund-raising and fund-distributing agency and the Council as clearing house for community problems, has not proved satisfactory [in that] there has been a paralleling of functions, the Fund having on occasion proceeded to carry out its constitutional right of investigating local agencies who are its beneficiaries, and on the other hand the Council having felt that it was the organization to whom the Fund should have turned for such investigation.

Merger was proposed, as a way of improving the efficiency of both organizations and of symbolizing the unity of the community. This merger provided Saint Paul Jewry with a local federation, which joined a group of more than fifty other local federations in the United States, including one established by Minneapolis in 1930. Indeed, Jewish communities all over the United States had faced in their histories similar challenges of community and had found solutions, as did Saint Paul, in federation.

## Purpose and Performance

Much has happened within the UJFC since its founding as the local Jewish federation some forty years ago. A review of the agency's records yields a rich and full history of personalities, events, challenges, decisions, successes, and failures. Among the wealth of observations that could be made about the opening decades of this history, two merit special consideration.

First, early on in the post World War II era, the UJFC wrought many of the changes that its supporters had hoped for, including reversing the long-time trend toward an increase in competing groups and institutions. By 1965 the ranks of Jewish organizations in the city had been tightened to fifty-three, in part through mergers and consolidations. But as it was transforming one trend in local Jewish life, the UJFC was reconstituting another, one perhaps of even greater historical significance. Within a short time after its founding, the agency realigned patterns of Jewish mutual assistance in Saint Paul, shifting them away from their traditional realm, the synagogue. "Although always a distinct minority, nonreligious Jews [have been] present in the Minnesota population from territorial days," Professor Hyman Berman of the

**Purim Overseas Food Drive, ca 1948, conducted by the Hillel Foundation, University of Minnesota.**

University of Minnesota Department of Hist wrote in 1981. Nonaffiliated Jews resided in Sa Paul since the days of disagreement between A bath Achim and Mount Zion. But the norm see to have been affiliation. In 1907 some 78.6% Saint Paul Jewry maintained congregational af ation; in 1952 an estimated 50% or more of city's Jewish families were members of sy gogues; in 1960 77%; and in 1981 it is belie approximately 65% of local Jewry belonged t house of worship. Yet, although Jewry in Sa Paul has remained religious, it had by the ea 1960s secularized much if not most of its effo at mutual welfare, investing a substantial port of them in the UJFC.

Into the 1950s, the various synagogues in city retained their primacy in the area of mut assistance, overshadowing, in significance if number, other organizations, including frater and **landsmanshaft,** pursuing the same work. rabbis of the community had a hand in maint ing these circumstances. The endeavors at co munity relations that rabbis at Mount Zion unc took in the nineteenth century illustrate that Sa Paul Jewry expected its rabbis to have a gr many social welfare responsibilities.

For over a century, the city's rabbis invol themselves in nearly every phase of commur affairs. They participated in youth work, phil thropy, resettlement projects (Mount Zion's Ra Wechsler was the moving force in the founding the Painted Woods agricultural colony), and sure time programming. Often, they led their c

gregations' activities in these pursuits and represented their members to the outside organizations involved. In fact, Saint Paul's rabbis were central figures in the histories of the Council of Jewish Social Agencies and the United Jewish Fund. Besides serving on these agencies' founding committees, rabbis in the community were active in the daily business of the council and fund, frequently chairing work groups or leading studies.

But change was imminent and came swiftly. Minutes from the early meetings of the UJFC board of directors suggest that rabbis were less active in the local federation than in the UJFC's two parent organizations. For example, rabbinic attendance at the board meetings was good initially (rabbis who held pulpits locally automatically received ex officio status on the agency's board) but beginning in the mid 1950s it became more sporadic. Similarly, the following excerpt taken from minutes of a board meeting held in May 1956 suggests that the UJFC was reassessing its requests of the rabbis:

> [A question] was raised as to whether the rabbis should not automatically be members of the Budget Committee as they were in previous years. After some discussion during which it was pointed out that membership on the Budget Committee must necessarily be limited in number ... and that the effort is to get as representative a cross section as possible in view of the fact that no particular group has special qualifications for service on it, a motion to add the rabbis to the Budget Committee ... was defeated.

Although this turn of events cannot be attributed to any one factor, it can be accounted for to some extent by the mainstreaming of local Jewry discussed in Chapter One, which began after World War I and accelerated after World War II. Saint Paul Jewry developed a group of leaders with social, economic, and civic credentials to take on the responsibilities of running the local community's secular affairs. The departure from the past practice of anchoring Jewish mutual aid in synagogues had implications for organized Jewish life in Saint Paul. One was primary: The UJFC needed to reach an understanding with the synagogues about their respective tasks and services. Such an understanding was not achieved quickly nor without difficulty. The following chapters discuss the histories of the UJFC's seven beneficiary agencies and point up the labors and rewards of establishing a working relationship between the federation and the synagogues.

A second observation about the early years of the UJFC's service to the Saint Paul Jewish community that deserves special note is related to the increasing secularization associated with the agency. The UJFC needed to accommodate itself and its work not only to the synagogues but also to the various other constituencies; it needed to build on the affiliate relationships that its parent organizations, the Council of Jewish Social Agencies and the United Jewish Fund, had entered into in the 1930s and early 1940s. Although the postwar declines in the Jewish population and the number of Jewish organizations may have made this work more manageable, it remained formidable. Yet within twenty-five years of its founding, the UJFC was generally recognized as the leading institution in Saint Paul's organized Jewish community.

In achieving such wide acceptance, the UJFC needed to address some primary concerns. It had to know the dimensions of its authority in a society that holds voluntary association as one of its fundamental operating principles. What obligations did Saint Paul Jewry, individually and collectively, have to its federation? What steps could the UJFC take to see that these obligations were met? The agency's records for this period yield one instance after another of the UJFC attempting to answer these questions.

The area of greatest contention related to the beneficiary status of groups. Did affiliation mean loss of autonomy? If so, in what areas? Funding? Policy? Administration? Programming? What, in other words, did a group give up when it affiliated with the federation and became a beneficiary of the UJFC's annual community-wide fund-raising drive? Over time the UJFC developed uniform guidelines that covered these points, balancing the agency's interests in communal unity with an affiliate's interest in its own affairs. This balance is reflected, for instance, in the following policy, which the UJFC had implemented by 1952:

> *"The United Jewish Fund and Council comes closest to being the central Jewish organization, probably having contact with more Jews than any other organization in the city."*
>
> University of Minnesota study, 1969

> It is not basically the function of the ... UJFC to give or withhold approval to every proposed change in the operating program of beneficiary agencies ... basically the individual agencies [have] the right and responsibility of such determination.

However, the federation's relations with other non-agency Jewish organizations in Saint Paul were often strained. On occasion the UJFC refused or considered refusing affiliation to organizations and disaffiliated or considered disaffiliating with organizations whose action it thought too "flagrant[ly] unilateral." Also on occasion organizations "indicated their willingness to withdraw from the fund [federation] rather than submit to dictation on matters of financial or other policy."

With individuals, the UJFC faced the challenge of developing a viable membership policy. Since it did not have "official" standing in the city's Jewish community in the old world tradition of a **kehillah** or a **kahal,** it needed to establish a status with Jewry in Saint Paul. Could the UJFC, in any sense, "speak" for the Jewish population locally? Who was eligible for membership? What rights and privileges did membership confer? What responsibilities did it entail? How was participation in the agency's affairs to be divided and shared?

Records suggest that at first the UJFC was largely the province of a small group within the local Jewish community. In the eyes of more than one member of Saint Paul Jewry, it was led by an elite, a coterie made up of prosperous and acculturated Jewish males, middle-aged or older, who dominated Jewish communal affairs locally after the war. Indeed, in 1945 when the agency's Board of Directors described a Jewish agency elsewhere in the country as "closed [in the] nature of [its] administration," they could have just as well been speaking of themselves. Nevertheless, although the UJFC did not elect its first woman president until 1977, it did begin much earlier the process of opening itself and its operations to a more diverse group of individuals, including — besides women — young adults, people from all classes, and persons with traditional or other affiliations to Judaism. In fact, by 1965 the agency had identified this matter as one of its "major areas of communal concern."

### Present and Past

Time must pass before full analysis and interpretation of the UJFC's work in the 1970s and 1980s can be done. Most recently, the agency has been keenly interested in improving on its past record. More specifically, the local federation has assigned priority to the professionalization of its operation.

Initially, the UJFC was staffed by volunteers. Like its parent organizations and other social welfare groups and agencies, the UJFC had its work done (or not done) depending largely on the commitment of interested members of the local Jewish community. That these were not always the best of circumstances was recognized early on. In fact, the committee charged with exploring the possibility of founding the UJFC wrote "Time and time again the same community leaders have been called upon ... in solving community problems. This places an unnecessary burden upon our limited leadership." Corrective measures were taken within a short time, including in 1945 the hiring of a professional executive director, Dan Rosenberg, who remained in the position for approximately twenty years (Rosenberg's successor, Morris Lapidus, headed the agency through 1978, being succeeded, in turn, by the current director, Kimball Marsh). Yet by any standard of measurement — decision making, implementation of policy, programming, staffing — the local federation remained into the 1960s more a community affair than a service operated by professionals for the community with the assistance of community members.

The UJFC has taken further steps over the last decade or more toward greater professionalization, including augmenting the staff with full-time trained, experienced community workers. In 1969, for instance, an assistant executive director position was created, and in 1981 the agency's fundraising responsibilities were reconstituted as a permanent salaried position. Similarly, the UJFC has sought to put its operation on a financial basis independent of annual gifts. To this end, it has recently pursued, in combination with its traditional yearly drive, a policy of endowments and legacies. The agency also has moved to establish

> *"When you talk about power [a survey indicated that] a total of ... 250 individuals represented the sum total of all the boards of all the social welfare agencies. ... That small group of people ... wore more than one hat at any one time."*

structured programs for its budgeting and social planning. Once addressed by standing committees that met periodically, these areas have begun to be treated in a more comprehensive fashion. Furthermore, the local federation has long had working relations with other groups, Jewish or otherwise, in Saint Paul and elsewhere, doing similar work. These include the city's United Way, various government agencies concerned with matters of social welfare, and the Minneapolis Federation. Into the 1970s, for instance, it joined its counterpart across the river and the federation in Duluth to form a tri-city federation, funding Jewish organizations whose mandates were statewide. Recently, however, the UJFC has coordinated its efforts with these social welfare organizations with a much stronger sense of shared purpose than it did earlier.

Thus, as the United Jewish Fund and Council completes its fifth decade of service to the Jewish population of Saint Paul, it can look back over a history in which it has transformed local Jewish mutual aid and Jewish community. In 1923 a member of the Saint Paul Jewish community wrote:

> One speaks of and feels that there is something that binds the Jews of Saint Paul into a community.... [But] how shall Saint Paul Jewry [as a community] be appraised? What are the standards of measurement?

**United Jewish Fund and Council fundraiser, ca 1970. Yitzhak Rabin, former Prime Minister of Israel, visits Saint Paul.**

**United Jewish Fund and Council Teens for Israel rally, 1970.**

**Residents of Sholom Home contribute to United Jewish Fund and Council 1973 Emergency Campaign.**

Some thirty years later, another member of the city's Jewish community provided what may be a partial answer: "Progress, advancement, and the readiness to meet new situations determine the validity of a community." Considered in this light, Saint Paul Jewry has not simply been "a number of Jews having nothing in common except that they live within the [same] geographic limits." Rather, its members have indeed come to constitute a community. As reflected through their increased support of the UJFC, community members have come to attach great significance to unifying and integrating their resources for mutual assistance: It is estimated that in 1984 the agency, in raising almost three million dollars through its annual drive, received gifts from approximately 70.4% of the local Jewish population.

If responsiveness to new circumstances characterizes community, so too does a constancy of purpose. And in this regard as well, Saint Paul

Jewry, through its federation, presents a record of achievement. The UJFC, and the UJF before it, has remained sensitive to Jewish needs abroad. From the tragedy of the Holocaust, to the joy of the founding of the State of Israel, through the urgencies of the Middle East conflicts, the agency has assigned paramount importance to supporting Jewish life overseas, traditionally directing its largest annual allocations toward that purpose. At the same time, it has attempted to maintain levels of funding sufficient to meet the needs of its seven beneficiary agencies as well as those of the other local and nonlocal organizations. The histories of these beneficiary agencies, and the roles that the UJFC and its parent organizations have played within them, provide the focus for the next several chapters.

United Jewish Fund and Council Campus Jewish Appeal, 1985.

Walk for Israel, 1982.

# PART II
# United Jewish Fund and Council Beneficiary Agencies

# CHAPTER 3

## B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, University of Minnesota

The B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation was established at the University of Minnesota in 1940 through the joint efforts of B'nai B'rith, the local Menorah Society, and the Jewish Federations of Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and Duluth. Since its inception, Hillel, with funding primarily from the Federations, B'nai B'rith, and student activity fees, has maintained an active presence on campus, continuing to serve the needs of Jewish students at the University of Minnesota.

### I

Several social and cultural clubs formed for and by Jewish students preceded Hillel at the University. Probably the most successful was the Menorah Society. Begun in 1903, not long after Jewish students started attending the University of Minnesota, the society was called originally the University Jewish Literary Society, later renaming itself the Menorah Society after a similar group founded at Harvard University. Although the society strove to "cultivate interest in and discussion of topics related to Judaism ... [and] to perpetuate its ideals and principles" through focusing on Jewish literature, it soon learned that to sustain membership it had to sponsor social events. "It has been found very desirable to give a small number of socials during the year, so that members may become better acquainted," a Menorah publication noted in 1912.

The society's membership included University faculty and "practically every Jewish student" on campus. Initially, student membership, reflecting the school's enrollment ratio, was predominantly male. By 1912, for instance, the society had only nine coeds. As one student on campus at the time commented, "a Menorah coed was a curiosity worthy of being preserved in the anthropological museum." However, this situation changed with time, as by 1926 nearly 50% of the society's 180 members were women.

During its history the Menorah Society experienced at least two ongoing concerns, insufficient funding and the desire for a home. The organization held its meetings in various locations on and off campus but felt that a home would enhance its identity and attract new members. As early as 1912, a Menorah member argued that if the Society had a permanent facility, "[Students] will join ... not in the reluctant manner which has been characteristic of some ... but with ... pride and interest.... [Students] will have a concrete object before them." In the same year, to raise funds for a new facility, the Society staged at the Shubert Theater in Minneapolis Israel Zangwill's "The Children of the Ghetto," apparently without the hoped-for results, as the Menorah Society never realized a home of its own. Nevertheless, the group prospered during the opening decades of the 1900s. Between 1912 and 1917 it grew, and expanded its range of activities to include debates, a Hebrew lunch club, and an English symposium conducted on campus and at local synagogues and B'nai B'rith lodges. But by 1927 the Menorah leadership was lamenting that the organization "never [had] any money," a circumstance that apparently remained chronic, for in the 1930s the society began receiving emergency grants from the UJF.

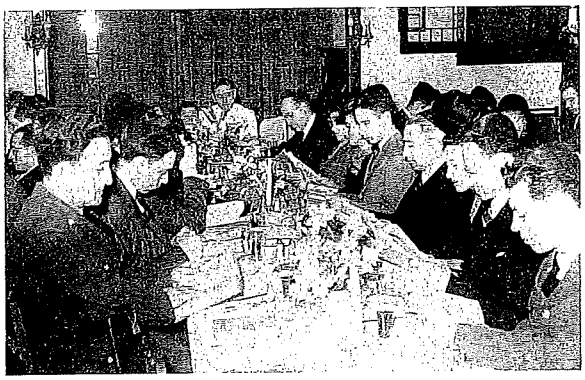
Besides the Menorah Society, other organizations on campus in the first decades of this century included the Joint University Committee, which consisted of representatives of various Minneapolis organizations interested in assisting Jewish students on campus; the Junior Temple Discussion Group, sponsored by the Junior Congregation of Temple Israel, which met at the student union; and several Jewish professional and social fraternities and sororities.

### II

In 1935, the National Hillel Director, A.L. Sachar, lectured at the Temple of Aaron. Five years later, in January of 1940, "a group of thirty-five students met, elected [a] president, and began working ..." toward what became, several months later, an officially recognized full-fledged Hillel Foundation on campus.

In September 1940, Rabbi Abraham E. Millgram of Philadelphia became Hillel's first director. His responsibilities included coordinating Hillel activities and representing the Jewish student body of approximately 1,200 to the faculty. In his first annual report, the rabbi listed what he saw as the organization's main goals:

1. To awaken and deepen Jewish loyalties among the students ... to enrich and spiritualize their lives and thus make them an asset to the Jewish people and to America.
2. To establish a better understanding between Jews and non-Jews on the campus in order to strengthen the American concept of democracy which is based on mutual understanding and sympathetic appreciation of the unique contributions of various cultural groups.
3. To provide the means for satisfying the religious, cultural, and social needs of our students.



**Hillel Seder, April 1, 1942. Held at Tau Delta Phi Fraternity House, University of Minnesota.**

In the same document, Rabbi Millgram noted that he "found a Jewish student body endowed with initiative and blessed with capable leadership," circumstances that he immediately put to good advantage as by 1941 Hillel had five hundred members with plans to double its membership, and a full agenda of programming. Under the rabbi's direction the foundation offered cultural activities, which included fireside discussion groups, Hebrew language and Semitic history classes, Bible study groups, dramatics, debate, and a Zionist study group; social activities, which included dinners, dances, and teas; religious activities, which included Friday evening services for out-of-town students and a committee charged to work with the National Conference of Christians and Jews; and student counseling services. Although some of these offerings were similar to those of the Menorah Society, which eventually merged with Hillel, others were new ventures and were not intended to overlap with the programming of other Jewish organizations on campus; these organizations retained their autonomy and were represented on the Hillel Student Council.

Like the Menorah Society, Hillel began operating without the benefit of a permanent home, us-

**Opening of first Hillel House at University of Minnesota, ca 1943.**

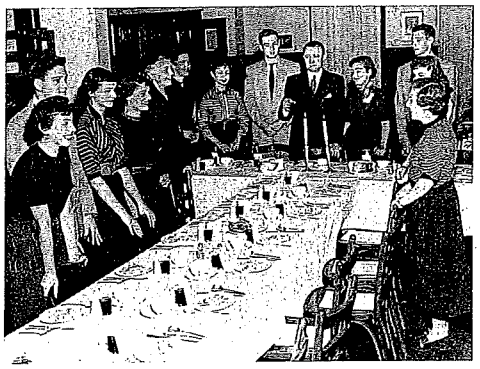
ing for space an older house that it rented that had limited facilities, or the student union and various sororities and fraternities. Like its predecessor, the Foundation believed it needed its own facility in order to sustain membership. As its director pled in his Report of Activities dated January 1941:

> Without suitable headquarters, the Hillel Foundation is like a disembodied soul. In order to exert a lasting influence on students, it is necessary to reach them not merely through occasional meetings or lectures, but through the happy influences of a home, a home of their own, where they can come for recreation as well as instruction.

As early as 1943, Hillel requested permission from its various sponsors, including the UJF, to campaign for funds to buy the property where the present rented Hillel House was situated. But the foundation did not begin to raise funds for its home until 1950, and did not open the new facility — its current one — until 1956, even though it had received the go-ahead by 1945 (the UJFC gave its approval for the project in that year). A number of setbacks prompted this delay, including — on more than one occasion — the deferring of fund-raising for the foundation because other projects, such as overseas aid, were deemed more significant by the state's Jewish community.

Hillel did indeed suffer in the 1940s and early 1950s from inadequate facilities. "Frankly, it is difficult for students to find either a place to sit, to eat, or to study," wrote Rabbi Norman Frimer,

First Hillel House.

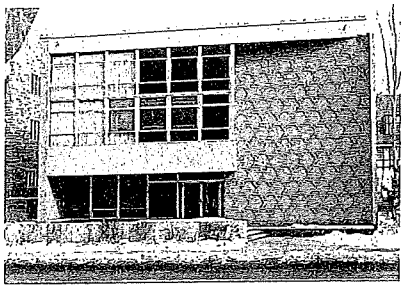


Hillel, ca 1950. Friday night dinner, with Rabbi Louis Milgrom officiating.

Hillel, ca 1945. Israeli folkdancing.

Rabbi Millgram's successor, in 1947. But such difficulties did not prevent the foundation from maintaining an active and full program for Jewish students and faculty at the University. Friday night services were expanded to include a dinner, and not only out-of-town students but local students participated. A weekly folk dance group and a model Passover **seder** for Jew and non-Jew, which became an "entrenched Hillel tradition," were introduced. Fraternities and sororities, after an initial coolness to Hillel, became more active. And, perhaps most important, Hillel implemented programming designed to meet the special needs of the newest constituency among its membership, the returning veterans from World War II. By 1947

Hillel Summer Institute, 1948.

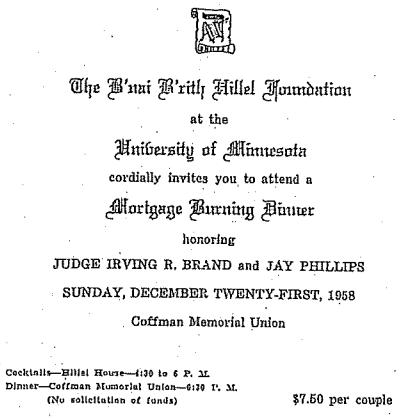


New Hillel House opens 1956.

*"It is [our] pious hope that the roof, the furnace, and [the] plumbing will stand up for another year."*

*Hillel Budget Statement, 1951*

six hundred students belonged to Hillel, approximately 60% of them ex-servicemen. To assist these older students, Hillel introduced a vocational guidance service, staffed once a week by counselors from the Saint Paul Jewish Vocational Service and the Twin Cities Group Vocational Guidance Committee. Indeed, at this juncture in its history, the University's Hillel was performing so well despite its poor facilities and the other difficulties it faced — including insufficient staffing, as a consequence of its ongoing funding problems — that it ranked, according to the **Keynoter,** a UJFC newsletter, September 1947, among the top ten Hillel programs in the country.



The B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation
at the
University of Minnesota
cordially invites you to attend a
Mortgage Burning Dinner
honoring
JUDGE IRVING R. BRAND and JAY PHILLIPS
SUNDAY, DECEMBER TWENTY-FIRST, 1958
Coffman Memorial Union

Cocktails—Hillel House—4:30 to 6 P. M.
Dinner—Coffman Memorial Union—6:30 P. M.
(No solicitation of funds) $7.50 per couple

**Invitation to Mortgage Burning Dinner, 1958.**

**Hillel, ca 1950. Rabbi Louis Milgrom addresses a group of students.**

## III

The 1960s and 1970s were challenging tir for Hillel. Although the new facility proved to an immediate asset, it did not fulfill all of the fo dation's needs. Old problems persisted. Fund remained limited. Building pledges were unp and a campaign had to be conducted to make the deficit. Arranging a division of funding sponsibilities among Hillel, the three local fede tions, and the national Hillel Foundation was ongoing problem. Temporary resolutions to t issue were realized but none completely satisi all parties involved.

Staff shortages remained as well. Requests funds for a full-time group worker and an assist director went unheeded. In 1964 Rabbi Frime successor, Rabbi Louis Milgrom, wrote, "it see almost messianic to hope that some day financ administrative and staff problems will solved...." Some thirteen years later this "me: anic hope" was partially met when the position assistant director, in the form of a coordinator student services, was finally created.

Moreover, the foundation faced new concerns this period in its history, as it had to accommod its programs and services to the post World Wa baby boom generation on campus. During the p litical activism of the late 1960s and early 197 a number of religious foundations at the Univ sity, including Hillel, suffered from student lack interest. On the whole, however, Hillel remain viable, reporting its activities as being "i mensely successful." As a University Vi president for Student Affairs observed about t foundation during this trying era, "Hillel is t only religious center on our campus having go contact with both radical and conservative s dents."

*"I cooked there [Hillel] on Fridays for the Shabbat diners and we filled their freezer with stuff. I picked up my little old ladies ... and we shopped for chickens (and I want to tell you) and we got there on Friday morning, cleaning and cooking and getting everything ready for the Friday night dinner."*

Hillel Student Council, 1961-1962.

Hillel, 1972. Chanukah party for students, faculty and children.

Indeed, these decades put real demands on Hillel to make creative and innovative changes in its operation. A 1971 study by the Twin Cities federations found that Hillel was not addressing these demands with complete satisfaction. Yet, as the University vice-president's remark suggests, the foundation had its successes at this time. In fact, if Hillel's performance was lacking, the reason did not lie in its unwillingness to respond to changing circumstances. As the following list of newly implemented programs and activities illustrates, Hillel enhanced its services during the 1960s and 1970s: a freshman orientation; an expanded interfaith model Passover **seder**; non-credit Jewish studies classes conducted by University faculty; counseling by staff of the Minneapolis Jewish Family Service; a kosher meat cooperative; a Jewish bookstore; an Israel week on campus; and a Campus Jewish Appeal for UJA.

Most recently, Hillel has remained concerned about maintaining services appropriate to its constituencies. In 1980 it participated with the Minneapolis and Saint Paul federations in another evaluation of its program. This study concluded that the foundation was underutilized — serving a core group of approximately 120 students, most of whom were in graduate school and affiliated with the Conservative movement — and recommended that steps be taken to increase levels of and widen participation. Several such steps were soon implemented, including sponsoring luncheons for Reform students.

In 1981, Hillel's facilities were renovated. In 1984, the foundation hired a new director, Rabbi Irwin Wise, who succeeded Rabbi Moshe Adler, Rabbi Milgrom's successor. With its newly refurbished home and a new executive director, Hillel looks to its future with optimism and a determination to build on its past service to Jewish students and faculty at the University of Minnesota.

# CHAPTER 4

## The Jewish Community Center

The Saint Paul Jewish Community Center became a UJFC beneficiary agency in December 1958. This affiliation cleared the way for the JCC to plan a new facility, housed in its current structure in Highland Park. It also permitted the JCC to develop a strong program designed to meet the needs of the local Jewish community as the UJFC has regularly increased its allocations to the agency.

I

The movement that led to the founding of a JCC in Saint Paul began around the turn of the century. Several local groups and branches of national organizations were formed to help the numerous poor Eastern European Jewish refugees who were then arriving in the city to adjust to their new living circumstances. Neighborhood House, founded on Saint Paul's West Side on July 5, 1900, probably was the earliest institution to provide such assistance. Primarily the product of the labors of the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society and the rabbis of Mount Zion, the settlement house offered an array of social and recreational activities, including homemaking courses, boys' and girls' clubs, games, dances, parties, picnics, and English classes.

**Neighborhood House sewing class, 1912.**

**Central Community House, ca 1930s.**

Another early antecedent of the JCC that aided the newly arrived Eastern European Jews was the Lowertown Community Center, later renamed the Central Community House. Opened in September 1921 at Thirteenth and Canada Streets, the Center moved in 1925 to a building it had remodeled on University Avenue. Although this institution had programs and objectives similar to those of Neighborhood House, one of its chief concerns, in addition, was remediating juvenile delinquency; this focus local Jewry maintained well into the 1960s, especially from the standpoint of preserving good relations with the larger community. Articles in the **American Jewish World,** including the one excerpted below from a 1925 edition, suggest that the Lowertown Center was a good influence on Jewish youth in the neighborhood.

Since the establishment of the Center, there has been only one case of [Jewish] delin-

*"Oh, we used to go to the Neighborhood House and belong to dancing classes, sewing classes — I was at the Neighborhood House all the time."*

quency from this district, and this was from a boy who had just arrived from another city and had not had an opportunity to come under the influence of the activities at the Center.

By the late 1920s both the center in Lowertown and Neighborhood House had taken steps toward becoming nonsectarian — deemphasizing Jewish interests and energetically promoting Americanization programs. By 1922 the former institution had become a beneficiary of the Saint Paul Community Chest. Similarly, although Jews were the primary users of Neighborhood House into the 1920s (as late as 1925, 60% of the facility's patrons were Jewish), the settlement was given to the Saint Paul community around the turn of the century, and in 1920 it too affiliated with the local Chest. By becoming "quasi-Jewish [in] character," Neighborhood House and the Lowertown Center followed a national trend among Jewish commuity organizations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that basically subscribed to the belief that "Jewish content was ... a separatist force thwarting the adjustment of the Jew to American Society."

Besides the center in Lowertown and Neighborhood House, a number of other organizations also can be considered antecedents of the JCC. Of twenty-five different cultural, educational, social, and fraternal Jewish organizations in Saint Paul, exclusive of Neighborhood House, named in a 1920 issue of the **American Jewish World,** many had activities and purposes that ultimately became part of the JCC program. One such organization, B'nai B'rith, was active in Jewish social and recreational programming on a number of levels in the city, including sponsoring a Friday night lecture series at Central Community House in 1925 and cosponsoring various cultural and social events for the local Jewish community at large. Another organization was Aleph Beth, a social club mentioned in Chapter Two. Very successful initially, having at one point over three hundred members, and in the early 1920s housed in rented space downtown, Aleph Beth actively promoted itself as a Jewish community center, seeing itself as "friendly to all Jewish interests ... a community center building on a small scale...." In fact, in 1924 the club had plans to construct its own building. However, because of internal conflicts, it disbanded just one year later.

Three other organizations that met the social needs of the local general Jewish population at this time were the YMHA, the YWHA, and the Junior Hebrew Cooperative Society. The two former organizations were founded in the late teens and both disappeared from the scene by the mid 1920s. The Junior Hebrew Cooperative Society, established in 1922, was to be a coordinating body for young men's and women's clubs working together toward the construction of a much desired community hall. However, it too was destined to be short-lived.

Although these various organizations contributed in one way or another to the emergence of a JCC in Saint Paul, the institution's lineage can be traced mainly to one parent group, the Jewish Educational Center, discussed in greater detail in Chapter Nine. This half educational/recreational community facility, built in 1930 on the Hill to accommodate the western exodus of local Jewry from the downtown and environs, offered leisure time programming that directly anteceded the JCC.

The JEC's opening could not have been more poorly timed. With the Great Depression having just begun, the institution, one year after its founding, was still saddled with nearly one-half of its original building fund outstanding in unpaid pledges. Nor did matters quickly take a turn for the better. By spring 1932, four hundred people had joined the JEC, but most had either not paid their dues or had made only partial payment. By way of addressing these ongoing financial problems, the JEC in 1933 formulated a plan that included having its leisure time component apply for beneficiary status with the Saint Paul Community Chest. This programming, known after 1933 as the Jewish Center Activities Association (JCAA), was soon accepted by the Community Chest, receiving its first grant from the community organization in mid 1934.

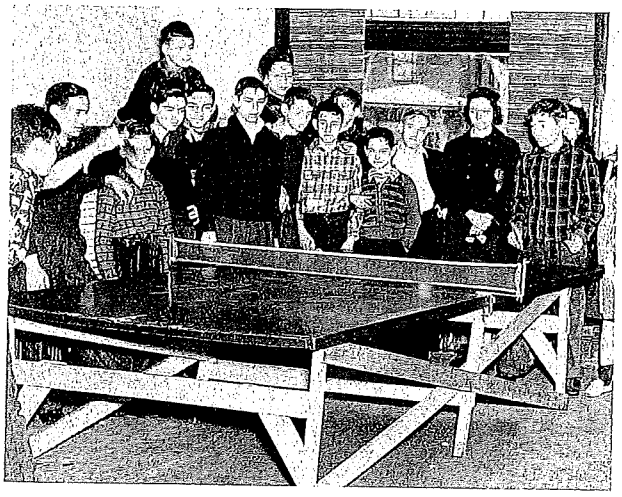
*"For years, pessimists and skeptics doubted the nebulous idea of a Jewish Community Center. Yet there were always small groups of far-seeing idealists [who thought] of a building to house and unite all of Saint Paul Jewry's divided interests ..."*

*"Save the Center. It will save the reputation of Saint Paul Jewry."*

Flyer, Ca 1933

Once institutionalized as the JCAA, the social and recreational activities at the JEC started to take a clear and definite direction. The JCAA had a mandate: to provide "character-building, recreational, cultural, and community activities." Moreover, although outside groups were at first the primary users of the center's leisure time facilities, within a short time the JCAA was able to develop its own groups, including junior and senior orchestras; a theater company, the Grotto Players; Boy and Girl Scout troops; and some adult classes. Also, an inhouse newspaper, **Center News,** begun in 1932, continued to be published for a number of years.

Indeed, during this period the JCAA became a true "center" for the Saint Paul Jewish community. In 1936 the JEC annexed an old house adjacent to it to be used primarily for children's groups and arts and crafts classes. This annex remained in use until 1940 when deteriorating conditions forced it to close, after which facilities for various programs were rented from Mount Zion and Temple of Aaron. By 1939 over one hundred groups were using the center, and the JCAA had introduced several programmatic changes to satisfy the demands of a growing clientele, including a highly successful summer "Stay-At-Home-Camp," begun with funds from the Community Chest. Then, with the coming of World War II, the JCAA, reflecting the assistance that the Saint Paul organized Jewish community had provided to Jewish soldiers stationed in the area during World War I, offered free memberships to servicemen at Fort Snelling and sponsored other services for soldiers stationed as far away as Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Colorado Springs, Colorado.



**Jewish Educational Center. Children playing ping pong in Annex.**

**Jewish Community Activities Association, 1940. Stay-At-Home Camp.**

**Jewish Community Activities Association, 1942. Children at Stay-At-Home Camp form V for Victory.**

In the immediate postwar era the JCAA continued to change, both in terms of programming and policy. By 1945, the center as an entity, in direct contrast to views promulgated by the Jewish community workers nationally some twenty years earlier, had decided that the institution's primary role was to serve the Jewish community and its interests, and secondarily, to serve the larger community and its needs. Also in 1948 the JCAA severed what had always been strained ties with the Hebrew School in the JEC, and in the same year the

> *"I am not exaggerating when I say that the Center has become the hub of Jewish activity in Saint Paul."*
>
> President's Report, May 18, 1936

Jewish Educational Center was officially renamed the Jewish Community Center of Saint Paul. In the 1940s, leisure time activities at the Center rapidly expanded. In particular, activities for young adults burgeoned, and included in 1946 the formation of three young men's clubs by returning veterans.

Hardly any time passed before these servicemen were to have an even greater impact on the center's operation. As early as 1944, a large percentage of the JEC's patrons lived outside the Holly and Grotto neighborhood. Thus, when the veterans returned home to Saint Paul, marrying and, in large numbers, purchasing homes in the Highland area, they precipitated a resolution to an issue that had been before the local Jewish community for some time — whether the newly established JCC should relocate, to stay in step with the postwar Jewish population shift south of the Hill district.

## II

By the mid 1950s the center had decided to move into the Highland neighborhood. Thus, in 1956 it sold its Holly and Grotto facility to the Community Chest and established Highland House on Cretin and Juno. Despite the logistical problems it faced with this relocation, the JCC continued to expand its offerings over the course of the decade. Activities of special note established at this time included attempts to meet the leisure time needs of individuals at both ends of the age spectrum. The Sophie Wirth Camp, after nearly thirty-five years of service, closed in 1944, largely because local Jewry no longer required programming that emphasized the recreational needs of the immigrant family. But the city's Jewish community had called for a new summer camp, one geared to the needs of its emerging middle class. In 1958 the JCC established such a facility, the Jack Butwin Day Camp, which enrolled more than three hundred children in its inaugural season. On the other end of the spectrum, the JCC undertook programming for the increasing numbers of seniors in the city, including the development of a Golden Circle Senior group.

Highland House proved to be a temporary venture. Interest in constructing a new and better home for the Center in Highland Park was expressed as early as two years after the JCC had vacated the old JEC building. Before it could develop such a new facility, local Jewry had to determine whether it in fact required a new community center and, if it did, whether construction was feasible. These matters were addressed by 1961 under the auspices of the UJFC. The federation coordinated studies that concluded a new center was warranted and that led to the selection of a site for the proposed facility. On September 8, 1963, ground was broken for what is the JCC's present home.

Camp Jack Butwin, 1958. Sponsored by the Jewish Community Center.

Breaking ground for new Jewish Community Center, 1963.

The JCC staff spent a great deal of time preparing for their move so the new center could begin its program as soon as it was opened to the public. The center thus was able to function in an organized manner from its first days of operation, which was fortunate, since the community immediately welcomed the new facilities that included a modern physical education department, meeting rooms, library, and auditorium. Designed for

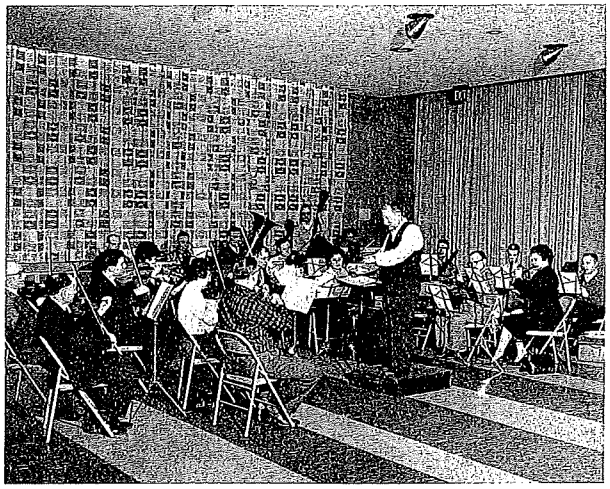
1,100 member families, the JCC had 923 member families by 1965 and surpassed its target figure by the mid 1970s.

To accommodate its growing membership, the JCC kept expanding and diversifying its offerings. Significant programmatic developments during the 1960s and 1970s included Israel-oriented activities including classes, special events, and the retaining of an Israeli **shaliach** (emissary), to meet the increasing local interest in the Jewish homeland; a strengthening and widening of physical education programming, including regimens for injury prevention and rehabilitation, to answer a heightened concern in the community for physical well-being; programming for the recently arrived Soviet émigrés, including a group established to facilitate the integration of Soviet seniors into American life; and activities for handicapped children.

Today, the Saint Paul Jewish Community Center is a lively and vital institution. Since Burton Garr became director in September 1970, the full-time professional staff has increased to sixteen, and more than three hundred persons, including maintenance, secretarial, and part-time workers, are employed. Another three hundred are active as volunteers. With this large enthusiastic staff and a membership of more than 6,000 people, the JCC seems to have a secure future. Through its organizational affiliation with the UJFC and the United Way, the institution does indeed appear destined to remain an important part of the leisure time interests of the local Jewish and general population for some time to come. At the same time, the JCC recognizes that if it is to continue to serve its Jewish and non-Jewish constituency competently, it must maintain a tradition that it has followed throughout its history, ongoing programmatic change. To this end, the center envisions an addition to its present building as it projects an increase in its membership with new and different recreational and social needs.

**Jewish Community Center, ca 1970s. Leisure League exercise class.**

**Jewish Community Center, ca 1970s. *Shaliach* with teens preparing to go to Israel.**



**Jewish Community Center Senior Orchestra, ca 1960s.**

# CHAPTER 5
# Jewish Community Relations Council, Anti-Defamation League of Minnesota and the Dakotas

The agency that was to become the Jewish Community Relations Council, Anti-Defamation League of Minnesota and the Dakotas was originally organized by a small group of Jewish community leaders from Minneapolis and Saint Paul in May 1938. From its inception, the agency has received funding from the Minneapolis Federation and the organized Jewish community of Saint Paul — first the UJF and later the UJFC.

## I

Prior to the formation of the new agency, complaints of anti-Semitic incidents in the state usually were addressed by Anti-Defamation Committees, which had been organized by local lodges of B'nai B'rith in Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and Duluth. These committees were an outgrowth of the formation of the Anti-Defamation League in 1913 by B'nai B'rith. The League was to combat what B'nai B'rith perceived to be an increase in anti-Semitism in the United States. The national headquarters for the ADL was in Chicago; B'nai B'rith volunteers in Minnesota cooperated with the main office in dealing with incidents that were national in character, such as boycotting objectionable films, as well as responding to local complaints. Not all their efforts met with success. For example, in 1918 newspapers in the state, even after receiving numerous complaints from local B'nai B'rith lodges, kept carrying real estate advertisements that stated that property would not be sold to Jews, Orientals, Greeks, etc. B'nai B'rith, in response to the advertisements, lobbied in the legislature and helped pass a bill (Chapter 188 of the Laws of Minnesota for 1918)

> declaring all written instruments relating to or affecting real estate, void, providing there was any condition in such instrument against conveying, mortgaging, encumbering, or leasing real estate to any person or persons of a specific religious faith or creed.

Yet, as discussed in Chapter One, discrimination in housing against "non-Gentiles" persisted in Minnesota into the 1950s.

Anti-Semitism was evident in Minnesota long before the formation of the ADL and remained endemic to the state long after the local committees were organized. The first recorded incident of physical abuse to Jews in the state occurred on July 14, 1882. A streetcar conductor on the Minneapolis-Saint Paul route attempted to physically eject several Russian Jews because they were "unfit to occupy the car with other people." In the late nineteenth century, Minneapolis, in particular, recorded a number of incidents of Jewish peddlers being attacked by youth gangs. Certain areas of the city were considered unsafe for Jews to traverse. Saint Paul Jewry was less affected by anti-Semitic incidents, but there were areas — social, residential, and commercial — where they were not welcome.

The local ADL committees had a friend in the editor of the **American Jewish World,** Samuel Deinard, the Reform rabbi in Minneapolis. Deinard used the pages of the **AJW** to publicize anti-Semitic incidents and to encourage appropriate responses. However, when the Ku Klux Klan began to recruit members in the state in 1921, the **AJW** remained silent. Rather than confront the Klan directly, Deinard published a lead article entitled, "The Cause of Jew Baiting?" in which he expressed his views on the subject. In addition, he published a series of letters that he had solicited from "leading non-Jewish citizens of Minnesota" responding to questions on discrimination. Apparently his effort failed to diminish the Klan's efforts, for by the mid 1920s there were possibly upward to 10,000 Klan members in the state. Klan membership began to decline after local newspapers, particularly the **Midway News,** began to publicize names of its members and Governor J.A.O. Preuss signed a bill that "prohibited the gathering of hooded or masked crowds." With the Klan's decline in importance, however, did not come a concomitant decline in anti-Semitic incidents. On the contrary, the decade of the Great Depression brought an increase in the number and virulence of hate groups.

During the first half of the 1930s, the Minneapolis and Saint Paul ADL Committees were constantly active. Meetings were called by the chairman whenever complaints were received or problems were otherwise noted. At first, the issues addressed were "minor abuses, frequently of local and transitory character." However, as the decades

wore on, intergroup tension increased and the committees met to discuss several larger and more pressing issues, such as "an alleged discussion by the Hennepin Grand Jury of the number of Jews engaged in the traffic of commercialized vice." Also at this time, one of the most virulent anti-Semitic groups, the Silver Shirts, began to amass followers in the state.

The growth of the Silver Shirts began to alarm members of ADL Committees. The organization, described as "nativist, and fascist," was organized in 1933 by William Dudley Pelley. In 1934, the Silver Shirts had an estimated 1,200 members in Saint Paul and another 800 in Minneapolis; statewide the organization claimed a membership of 6,000 only three years later. The growth of this organization, threatening in itself, became even more alarming when viewed with a number of additional local and national events.

During those years, the press coverage of Hitler's activities in Europe increased. The local branch of the German-American Bund was holding frequent meetings, and rumors circulated that the Nazi Bund was planning to establish a training camp somewhere in Minnesota. Several local ministers had joined a small but very vocal faction of fundamentalist clergy openly preaching anti-Semitism from the pulpit and in radio broadcasts, and distributing anti-Semitic literature. Finally, in a volatile political campaign in 1938 between the incumbent, Governor Elmer Benson, and Harold Stassen, some of Stassen's supporters and members of his staff began an overtly anti-Semitic campaign focused on several Jews in Governor Benson's administration. They alleged that Benson's Jewish staff was evidence that the Farmer-Labor Party was becoming a pro-Communist organization. A scurrilous cartoon, reproduced on posters and even giant billboards, was distributed throughout the state. It was entitled "Three Jehu Drivers" and showed a donkey with the governor's face ridden by three figures, caricatures of Jewish men in the governor's administration. Surrounding the donkey are Yankee, Irish, Italian, Scandinavian, etc., figures, holding up their hands trying to climb on.

Protests were lodged condemning the poster and other anti-Semitic literature that had been distributed statewide. Jewish Republican leaders met with Stassen requesting that he personally intervene and stop what was happening. Little was accomplished, however, and Stassen recorded an overwhelming victory over Benson.

The open and virulent anti-Semitism displayed in the 1938 campaign galvanized the state's Jewish community. The Anti-Defamation Committees of Minneapolis and Saint Paul B'nai B'rith Lodges

IF YOU ARE GOOD, BOYS YOU MAY GET A FEW CRUMBS!
ABE HARRIS MINNESOTA LEAGUE PROPAGANDIST
COME ON, BOYS; LET'S GO!
GOVERNOR BENSON
TO RULE OR RUIN
THE FORGOTTEN MAN
THE LEGISLATIVE TAIL
THE REDS
THE JEWS
THE "THREE JEHU DRIVERS"
Prepared and issued by R. J. Lloyd, 2728 Bloomington Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minn., in behalf of better government.

Cartoon "The Three Jehu Drivers," 1938. *From the Collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.*

met jointly on May 24, 1938, to form a singl group that would be responsible solely for ant defamation work in Minnesota. The group agree that their objective would be to counter the grov ing interreligious and interracial tension in th state, through efforts to educate the public wit accurate information about the role of Jews i American political and economic life. They als would inform the people about the oppressio Jews had experienced in other countries, an "join with all civic minded individuals and grou in efforts to promote good government, whol some social conditions and to combat corruptio vice, and other anti-social forces."

After a chair had been chosen for the new stat wide group, a small amount of funding was r quested and made available from UJF and th Minneapolis Federation. An eighteen-membe state executive committee was selected, with s representatives each from Minneapolis and Sai Paul, three from Duluth, and one each from Roc ester, Virginia, and Mankato. They called the new organization the "Jewish Anti-Defamatic Council of Minnesota."

## II

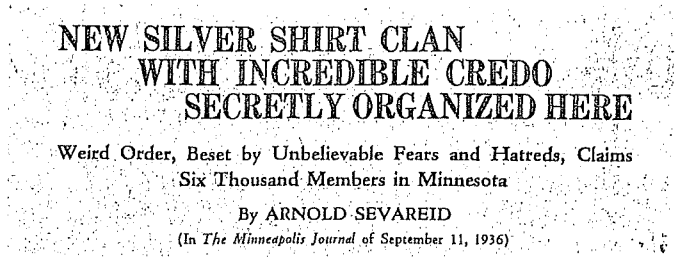
In designing the new group, the members ha hoped to remain at least nominally under the au pices of the national Anti-Defamation League ( B'nai B'rith. However, they wanted to be able t function primarily as an autonomous local boc

with the freedom to make their own decisions and take immediate action on local issues and incidents. When the members of the council made their proposal for what would amount to a branch office of ADL to the national office in Chicago, they met with an unfriendly response. A delegation from the Minnesota group went to Chicago to try to negotiate an equitable agreement. They were unsuccessful in their attempt and returned to Minneapolis to formally organize an entirely local body that would maintain cooperative working relationships with the ADL, the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, and the Jewish Labor Committee, but that was not officially identified or connected with any national organization.

For a short time the council tried to operate with only a part-time voluntary director, but it soon became evident that a more stable arrangement would be necessary. In May 1939, Samuel L. Scheiner was hired as Executive Director, "and his duties at that time were primarily limited to investigations and making exposures of [anti-Semitic incidents and] subversive and un-American individuals in the state of Minnesota." The council's office was located in Minneapolis and handled claims in that city. In addition, the council had identified "key men" in various areas of the state to more efficiently and economically handle complaints from regions around the state. Additional "offices" or "branches" that were represented on the statewide council but retained some local autonomy were also maintained in Saint Paul and Duluth. That the Saint Paul branch of the council — known as the Saint Paul Jewish Council — retained its own identity is evidenced by the close conformance of its constitution with that of the state council.

The Jewish Anti-Defamation Council of Minnesota was the first completely independent statewide Jewish community relations agency in the United States. It seems to have been an idea whose time had come and, within a few months, similar agencies were being formed in such communities as Philadelphia, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Saint Louis, and others. The new agency also met with local support and found many concerned and sympathetic advocates at the University of Minnesota and among organized labor, the more liberal clergy, and the press.

One of the first issues addressed by the new organization as it was being formed was the growing threat from the Silver Shirt organization in the Twin Cities. According to one of the original organizers of the council, the new agency had contacted the editor of the **Minneapolis Journal** and "persuaded [him] to assign a reporter to follow the Silver Shirt organization in the city." The result was a series of very effective humorous sketches ridiculing the organization, written by Arnold [Eric] Sevareid. This series of articles was later reprinted by the council and distributed widely.



NEW SILVER SHIRT CLAN WITH INCREDIBLE CREDO SECRETLY ORGANIZED HERE

Weird Order, Beset by Unbelievable Fears and Hatreds, Claims Six Thousand Members in Minnesota

By ARNOLD SEVAREID

(In *The Minneapolis Journal* of September 11, 1936)

**Reprint of newspaper article headline, 1936.**

In his 1942 report to the council, Scheiner reported that in the first three years of operation, "approximately 500 complaints dealing with anti-Semitic incidents have been investigated and handled" by the staff. A cooperative working relationship between the council and the national office of the ADL had apparently been smoothly established. Scheiner maintained an ongoing correspondence with the Chicago ADL office regarding events occurring in Minnesota but bearing on national concerns, such as speeches made in this area by national anti-Jewish crusaders. In addition, the council, the national ADL, and other local agencies in various areas of the country would trade information about individuals who were considered suspect. For example, the head of the Chicago national office of the ADL contacted the Minnesota Council for information about a chef then employed at a Jewish owned hotel in Saint Paul, who had been suspected previously of Nazi and other anti-Jewish activities in Dayton, Ohio, and Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The years of World War II brought continued increase in interreligious and intergroup tension. From the city of Saint Paul came steady reports of anti-Semitic incidents, distribution of offensive literature, and several reports of meetings of Silver Shirt groups and pro-Nazi Bund. Two youths were arrested and convicted for having "painted swastikas ... on the Sons of Moses synagogue in Saint Paul, as well as a number of other Jewish business places in that city." Several complaints also were beginning to come into the council office of anti-Semitic remarks being made in classes by several teachers at Saint Paul Central High School. Boycott lists of Jewish owned businesses in Saint Paul and Jewish movie actors were being left in public places, such as in movie houses, on streetcars, and at streetcar waiting areas. In September of

1941, a report came in that a Jewish man in Saint Paul "was physically beaten up by a Nazi in that city." The Minneapolis office usually referred these complaints to its Saint Paul affiliate. In other instances, such as reports of anonymous swastika paintings on the sidewalks of Jewish owned homes in the Highland area, complaints were referred to the "Chief of Police in Saint Paul and [a request made] that a squad car patrol this district during the next few days in an effort to find the perpetrators of these malicious destructive acts."

One of the primary tactics used by the council to combat anti-Semitism was negotiation. The council often took such action as appointing special committees to "check into" the rental policies of meeting places, auditoriums, and halls where "objectionable" speakers had been presented. In one specific incident in the fall of 1941, a resident of Buffalo, Minnesota, reported that while shopping at a dry goods company in Saint Paul, a customer had been harassed by several anti-Semitic and singularly offensive remarks made by the son of the owner. Scheiner made several trips to Saint Paul to talk with the owners and was unsuccessful in getting an apology for the incident. Scheiner told the owner, "we would have to take other steps in this matter. Whereupon I went to see ... [the owner of] a wholesale clothing company" in Saint Paul and left a copy of the letter of complaint. The wholesaler "promised to see to it that as much business as possible would be steered away from the ... Dry Goods Company." Scheiner told the complainant in his follow-up letter, "if you can do likewise, you are free to do so, for that is the only way we can hurt these people, is to hurt their pocketbooks...." An apology was soon received from the owner of the dry goods concern.

The council also used such positive tactics as community outreach and judicious use of the press and other journalistic media. The director of the council often took time to speak to non-Jewish groups during the war years, delivering talks "showing definitely the tie-up between anti-Semitism and totalitarianism." He also monitored letters to the editor in newspapers throughout the state, and was successful in "inspiring" non-Jews to write effective letters to the editor in response to negative material that appeared.

In 1942, the council underwent its first major reorganization. The national office of ADL in Chicago had begun to express some discontent with the council's using the term "Anti-Defamation" in its name. The ADL had, in the past, criticized several of the Minnesota Council's actions because they had acted before the national group had. The ADL had also begun to complain that the council was being confused with the national organization and was interfering with the ADL's use of national press wires. Apparently the Jewish Anti-Defamation Council of Minnesota had become a force to be acknowledged and reckoned with. The board of directors of the council also had begun to feel that a name change might be in order. They noticed that the work the council was performing had been changing from an essentially defensive function of simply "investigating and exposing hate groups and their subversive literature and leaders," to more "positive educational programs of lectures, [literature], etc. ... to build a new climate of opinion toward minorities in the State of Minnesota." The agency was reorganized, a new constitution and bylaws were drafted, officers were elected, and the name of the organization was officially changed to the "Minnesota Jewish Council." The newly organized council would continue as it has throughout its history to be financed almost entirely by the Federations of Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and Duluth, with a small amount of additional funds from smaller Minnesota communities and some independent contributions.

As the 1940s went on, the council began to identify patterns of several larger issues that they felt needed to be addressed. These included an ongoing self-monitoring of the Jewish community, discrimination in housing, rentals, and employment and against other minorities, labor relations, and the need for a positive and aggressive outreach effort in the rural areas of Minnesota.

The task of self-monitoring of the Jewish community by the council took on two aspects. The first was an effort to provide local Jews with a positive "interpretation ... of its Jewish backgrounds and cultural achievements, of the relationship of Jews to the groups within the total community, and of stimulation of the Jewish community to a consciousness of the part which every

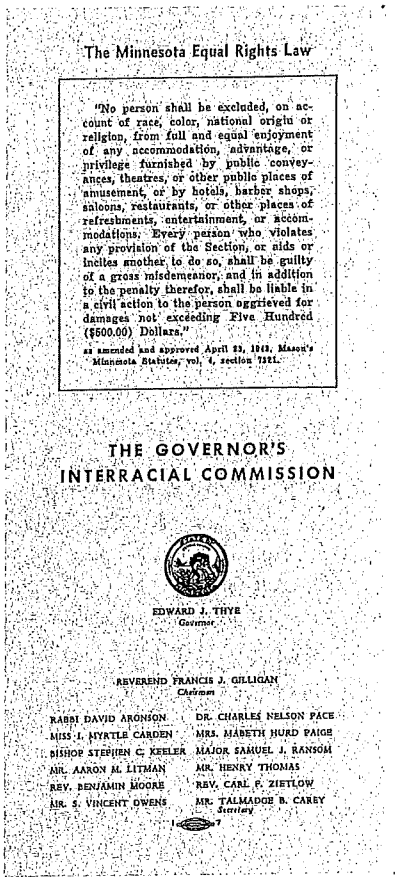
> *"We can build a much stronger Jewish society if [we] ... have a certain confidence in [our]selves ... so that [we] have the broad view rather than the immediate one of one type of Jew ... [that] when he sees the word 'jewelry' hyphenated in the newspaper ... jumps because he is afraid they are saying something about the Jews."*

individual can play in achieving better group relations." As an adjunct, the council was extremely concerned about activities of individual Jews in Minnesota that could possibly be interpreted as negative by the larger community and thereby increase tension between individuals or groups. By 1942, the council had instituted a "Committee on Correction," which investigated reports "of anti-civic, anti-social, individuals [and] institutions, as well as any unfair trade practices which might be followed by members of our Faith." When complaints were received, representatives of the committee made a personal visit and quietly attempted to arrange an equitable settlement.

Relatively few complaints about Jews came from outside the Jewish community itself. The council was far more likely to investigate a situation because of a quiet mention from another Jew. In one instance, a fellow council member supplied the office with a copy of a newspaper advertisement placed in the **Saint Paul Dispatch** by a Jewish merchant that read "Help wanted — Girl experienced in saleswork, to work Saturday afternoon and evenings. Gentile preferred...." Although not stated in the correspondence regarding this issue, the intent of the ad was probably to avoid asking a Jewish employee to work during the Sabbath, but it was, nonetheless, a violation of the council's policy not to allow any statement of preference based on ethnic, racial, religious, or national identity to go unremarked. The council also attempted to persuade litigants in court cases between Jews into an amicable out-of-court settlement or the B'nai B'rith Arbitration Court and thus away from the public arena.

Complaints of housing and rental discrimination against Jews were received constantly by the council through the 1940s and 1950s. In most cases, the council referred these matters to local government authorities, often the City Council, for appropriate action. In at least one instance, however, local government referred such a complaint back to the Jewish community when "the City Council of Saint Paul determined that [the Saint Paul Jewish Council] should see ... the owners of [a] concern and try to obtain a modification of [their] ruling to rent to Gentiles only."

An even more persistent problem was the widespread practice of resort owners in Minnesota of denying rental to Jews and other minority vacationers. An amendment made to the Minnesota Equal Rights Law in April of 1943 required that "public accommodations within the State could not be denied legally to any person by virtue of their race, color, national origin, or religion." Thereafter, a series of euphemisms was used to circumvent the law, including "selected clientele" and "restricted clientele." Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut recalls that during his first summer in Minnesota, he and his family had a humiliating experience at a resort in Northern Minnesota when it became known to the owners that they were Jewish. "It was the first time since Germany [in the 1930s] that I had come across an open expression of anti-Semitic sentiment...." The Minnesota Jewish Council responded to such incidents by mailing, to each resort owner and to the respective county attorneys, literature that contained a copy of the State's Equal Rights Law, but the effect appears to have been negligible.



The Minnesota Equal Rights Law

"No person shall be excluded, on account of race, color, national origin or religion, from full and equal enjoyment of any accommodation, advantage, or privilege furnished by public conveyances, theatres, or other public places of amusement, or by hotels, barber shops, saloons, restaurants, or other places of refreshments, entertainment, or accommodations. Every person who violates any provision of the Section, or aids or incites another to do so, shall be guilty of a gross misdemeanor, and in addition to the penalty therefor, shall be liable in a civil action to the person aggrieved for damages not exceeding Five Hundred ($500.00) Dollars."

as amended and approved April 23, 1943. Mason's Minnesota Statutes, vol. 4, section 7321.

THE GOVERNOR'S
INTERRACIAL COMMISSION

EDWARD J. THYE
Governor

REVEREND FRANCIS J. GILLIGAN
Chairman

| | |
|---|---|
| RABBI DAVID ARONSON | DR. CHARLES NELSON PACE |
| MISS I. MYRTLE CARDEN | MRS. MABETH HURD PAIGE |
| BISHOP STEPHEN C. KEELER | MAJOR SAMUEL J. RANSOM |
| MR. AARON M. LITMAN | MR. HENRY THOMAS |
| REV. BENJAMIN MOORE | REV. CARL F. ZIETLOW |
| MR. S. VINCENT OWENS | MR. TALMADGE B. CAREY Secretary |

Reprint of the Minnesota Equal Rights Law.

The council was also concerned with employment discrimination directed against Jews and the difficulties faced in employment situations because of prejudice. In 1942, Scheiner wrote that

> employment discrimination work has taken at least three-quarters of my time. We have a full-time man hired for that purpose now, and [still] the more work he has, the more work I have....

Seven years later, he observed that

> the MJC was among the very first Jewish organizations either locally or nationally to recognize as early as 1940 ... that it would not be enough to solve the problem of anti-Semitism if we did not at the same time help the American Negro, American Indian, and every other minority or ethnic group to achieve full status and equality, both before the law and in everyday life.

Acting on this belief, the council maintained a cooperative relationship with the local NAACP, the Urban League, and the editors of the local black press. According to Scheiner, "Many matters of mutual interest to the Negros and Jews have been adjusted as a result of this cooperation."

The council's concern about employment issues naturally extended to the arena of labor relations. In the early 1940s, labor groups would often request that the council act as arbitrator in cases involving Jews. Their success in these matters had helped to establish a positive relationship with organized labor in Minnesota. Eventually, the council created the United Labor Committee for Human Rights. The director of this committee was engaged in positive outreach efforts with unions, and provided speeches, films, and literature at union and other labor meetings throughout the state. The committee worked "not only in making organized labor respect the Jewish community and to wipe out the vestiges of anti-Semitism, but to give labor unions a much better understanding of the many complex problems faced by American Indians and Negros." Originally, the position of executive director of this committee had been offered to Hubert H. Humphrey, who had recently left the War Manpower Commission. Humphrey respectfully declined the offer from the council in order to run for mayor of Minneapolis.

In its capacity as a statewide organization, the Minnesota Jewish Council found itself faced with the problem of how to reach the sizable rural population with its message of human relations. In 1942 a self-evaluation committee convoked by the council recognized the need for "an intensive and extensive campaign" to reach "a large farm population, many of whom know little about the Jew and who because of this and other factors, are vulnerable to anti-Semitic propaganda." The committee recommended that the council send speakers to state and county fairs, grange meetings, and rural churches and schools; supply movies and literature on a human relations theme; and institute an educational effort that would reach rural youth through 4-H clubs and schools. This co cern was reinforced by a suggestion received fro the national ADL at about the same time. Th national ADL office offered to supply the assis ance of its own rural press service and to provic to the Minnesota Council material prepared a cording to local needs.

The council responded to this rural need, part, by creating the 4-H Radio Speaking Contes Participants in the contest were asked to wri speeches on topics dealing with "the promotion democratic ideals" and "discussion on how eliminate prejudice, discrimination and bigot and how to improve [relations between] rur young people and city youngsters of vario creeds, races, and national origins." In 1955, th Minnesota Jewish Council was given the Freedo Foundation Award Medal for its work in creatir and promoting the contest. The council felt th this contest made uncountable friends for Minn sota Jewry in rural areas, and that "this particul project has reached the rural areas most effe tively and has served to create a greater unde standing in rural areas for minority groups."

Cooperation with other human relations and r lated organizations had always been one of th priorities of the Minnesota Jewish Council. Befo World War II, its parent organization, the Jewis Anti-Defamation Council of Minnesota, was or of the charter members of the General Jewis Council, a group set up to coordinate the efforts national and local organizations in working t ward the establishment of the State of Israel; later became the National Community Relatio Advisory Council. In 1946, Scheiner wrote th the Minnesota Jewish Council worked cooper tively with the Saint Paul Council on Human Rel tions, the Minneapolis Mayor's Council on Huma Relations, the Shirtsleeves Club of Minnesota, th National Conference of Christian and Jews, Inc

> *"I had been an attorney for the NAACP for 15 years without pay. Had their first discrimination cases brought here. Forced them on the county attorney. Lost every one of them. Because they'd bring some guy from Chicago, $100,000 a year national attorney ... and with the jury, nobody could have beaten them."*

the Duluth Interracial Council, the Governor's Interracial Commission, the NAACP and Urban League of the Twin Cities, and the Junior Association of Commerce in Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and Duluth, as well as numerous other national and local organizations.

Throughout World War II, many had felt that the end of hostilities would bring an increase in the tide of anti-Semitism. The council budgeted for an expected additional expense that would be needed for investigation of incidents in those initial postwar years. The council also kept up its cooperative relationship with other city, state, and national agencies that were investigating "individuals suspected of subversive activity." In one respect the expectations of increased anti-Semitism were realized. In 1946, Carey McWilliams, a lawyer and writer of national prominence, wrote an article that appeared in the autumn 1946 issue of **Common Ground,** entitled "Minneapolis, the Curious Twin." In the article, McWilliams compared the patterns of anti-Semitic incidents in Minneapolis and Saint Paul and concluded that Minneapolis was the "capital of anti-Semitism in the United States."

In response to the article, the city of Minneapolis, with help from the Minnesota Jewish Council and a number of other groups and individuals, instituted the Mayor's Committee on Human Rights. The Committee was given the mandate to conduct a citizen's self-survey in an attempt to determine whether the claims made by McWilliams were correct. At the time, Scheiner believed that "the results of the survey more than supported the findings made ... in the article." Twenty-five years later, Scheiner changed his views and then commented that although Minneapolis service organizations did discriminate against Jews, Minneapolis was no better nor worse than any other city in regard to attitudes and feelings about Jews.

At about the time of the article and subsequent survey the number of specific complaints being received by the Minnesota Jewish Council began to drop dramatically. The 1952 midyear report of the council states that no complaints of overt anti-Semitic incidents had been received in the period covered by the report.

With this change in trends, the council began to focus even more on its role of providing "a longer range educational program on basic human relations," and to "disseminate accurate facts about Jews in order to maintain the dignity of Jewish life; by carrying on an educational program designed to dislodge deep-seated social and religious prejudices; and by working for better understanding among all racial and religious groups." As part of this effort, in 1946, in cooperation with the National Conference of Christian and Jews, Inc., the council had begun to offer scholarships to outstanding public school teachers to attend intercultural education workshops presented at the University of Minnesota and the University of Chicago. The Duluth branch of the Minnesota Jewish Council sponsored a high school essay contest in 1948, and the council sponsored several education institutes and workshops in the Twin Cities area. One of these institutes was entitled "Judaism — A Living Religion," and was cosponsored with Mount Zion Temple Sisterhood.

Despite the demonstrated effectiveness of the work of the Minnesota Jewish Council, the years of the late 1940s and early 1950s saw an increase in criticisms of the organization. Several times between 1946 and 1953 the Minneapolis Federation suggested that a general survey be conducted to review and appraise the operation of the council, but the idea never was implemented. Although the Minneapolis Federation had always provided more than 50% of the council's funding, criticisms came most often from Saint Paul. For the most part, Saint Paul community leaders were concerned about whether or not their people were receiving adequate representation from an agency that was statewide in focus but based in Minneapolis. Other complaints were also beginning to emerge. In a 1946 letter to the president of the UJFC, a member of the fund's Social Planning Committee reported a number of criticisms that he had heard about the council. These included:

> the Council has no fixed program of policy; the Council [seemed to be] run by a small, powerful clique which is not truly representative; the Council does not meet often enough, considering the importance of its work; the Council spends too much money; [and], the Saint Paul Council [the Saint Paul branch agency] has no program, it has no one to do its work.

In response to these criticisms, the UJFC took a close look at the operations of the Minnesota Jewish Council and began to call for another major reorganization. Several of its recommendations were implemented, including the suggestion that the council hire an assistant director who would head the operations of the Saint Paul branch office, and who would be responsible for stimulating community involvement and discussion. The UJFC also recommended a study that would determine whether the existing methods of appointing representatives to the council ensured that all community interests were receiving representation.

The changes were short-lived. In the midst of growing concern over rising costs, diminishing sources for funding, and duplication of services, the Minnesota Jewish Council announced that it would close its Saint Paul office as of March 31, 1954. The Assistant Executive Director in Saint Paul would resign as of that date. The State Council also agreed, on recommendation of a study committee, to move their offices to a Saint Paul location.

Two important issues were beginning to emerge during the 1950s. The council was becoming increasingly concerned about religion in public schools and the possible threats to civil rights and academic freedom in the McCarthy era. Scheiner had written as early as 1949,

> it is well to point out that with the growing hysteria in this country regarding Communism, it will be necessary for Human Relations Agencies to remain increasingly alert to the fact that attempts will be made to foster repressive legislation, ostensibly against Communism, which, however, in the long run will affect minority groups.

In 1952 he warned that the rising tide of "McCarthyism" and its

> widespread intimidation of faculties and administrations ... has created a pronounced resistance to the incorporation of the more recent techniques and programs of intercultural education ... and teachers are increasingly afraid to risk public censure for promoting inter-cultural programs.

By the mid 1950s, the council was becoming increasingly concerned with the Christologic bias in public schools, especially during religious holidays. Attempts were made to meet with representatives of public schools to explain the feelings of the Jewish community. One example was a meeting held in 1969 with the superintendent of Saint Paul's public schools to express concern about the participation of the schools in the annual Saint Paul Christmas pageant. Their objection, they explained, was not with school children being a part of the pageant, but in the official involvement of the school and in student participation during school hours.

The late 1950s brought another call for reorganization of the council. Supporters continued to be concerned about duplication of services, in view of an increasing demand for funds among agencies. By this time, the national Anti-Defamation League had established its own branch in Minnesota and an old tension between the two agenci had escalated to a dispute over which one was t most appropriate agency to serve the area. 1954, the Tri-City Federation had recommendec more effective cooperation between the MJC a the ADL

> not only because it could lead to more economical operation of both agencies, and both in the last analysis depend upon the same community funds for support [but] as a matter of basic policy in the development of good intergroup relations, it was felt that it was important the two agencies do not appear to be in conflict.

In September 1955, the **Saint Paul Jewi News** reported that the

> Minnesota Jewish Council and National Defense organizations which are represented [in the state], reached an agreement Thursday, September 8, 1955, as to the role of the national organizations in the area of human relations in the state of Minnesota. This agreement, which was reached after much discussion, places full responsibility and primacy in the Minnesota Jewish Council for Human Relations work in the State of Minnesota.

In January 1959, the council was again reorga ized and its name changed to the Jewish Comm nity Relations Council of Minnesota. The coun wanted to "clearly distinguish it and its work fro that of an exclusive religious representative bo to a Jewish community relations organizatic made up of lay and spiritual leaders." The JCR also intended to begin to solicit new membe from organizations and religious groups that ha not previously been affiliated with it. Its foc would continue to be

> the intrusion of religion in the public schools, population movements and their impacts on political alignments and relationships, racial segregation in our state with its impact on Jewish community relations, ... and community relations implications of day to day developments in the Middle East.

Samuel Scheiner remained at his post as dire tor of the Jewish Community Relations Counc until his retirement in the early 1970s. During h tenure he saw a diminishment in anti-Semitic inc dents in the state. By the early 1970s, accordin to a researcher studying anti-Semitism in Minn

sota, "organized anti-Semitism in Minnesota no longer exists...." Occasionally incidents did occur and were reported to the JCRC. One of the most notorious of the early 1970s was the hoax perpetrated upon the press and State Board of Medical Examiners that almost resulted in Jewish circumcision being declared a "medical practice" and therefore subject to state regulation.

In 1975 the JCRC underwent its latest reorganization when it merged with the local Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith to form the Jewish Community Relations Council/Anti-Defamation League of Minnesota and the Dakotas. The merger was effected after three years of negotiations and also included the Commission on Israel Information and Education of the Minneapolis Federation, the Minnesota-Dakotas Action Committee for Soviet Jewry, the Jewish War Veterans, and the Jewish Labor Committee. The new combined agency's first director was Morton W. Ryweck, who took the position in September 1975.

The agency's program focus during the past decade has encompassed campaigns to protect Jewry abroad, to safeguard Jewish rights in the three-state region, and to advance intergroup understanding while combating anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry.

JCRC/ADL has held rallies in support of Israel and sponsored speakers and institutes on Israel for diverse audiences. Soviet Jewry remains a continuing concern of the agency, particularly since so few Jews have been given permission to emigrate in the past several years. Also receiving attention is the plight of Jews in Argentina and Ethiopia. The latter group, in particular, has received a great deal of media attention. The JCRC/ADL was responsible for organizing in 1984 an interfaith campaign to send medical supplies to benefit all Ethiopians.

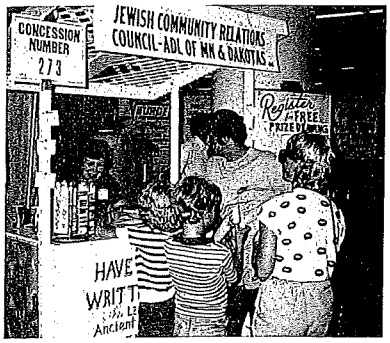
JCRC/ADL Soviet Jewry Action Committee, with banner and posters, ca 1980.

On the domestic scene, the agency continues to battle anti-Semitism, frequently working through coalitions, such as the Twin City Human Rights Coalition, which the agency initiated and still staffs. JCRC/ADL cosponsors an annual workshop on Jewish-Christian relations with Luther-Northwestern Seminary and is a member of the Minnesota Interreligious Committee.

The agency monitors and combats violations of church-state separation in the public schools, and sponsors teacher workshops on a variety of Jewish subjects. Workshop titles include The Holocaust, Prejudice Reduction, Combating Extremism, and Teaching the Jewish Experience. In addition, as part of the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition, it works to promote legislation to answer the needs of the underprivileged in Minnesota.

The JCRC/ADL continues in the path it set when it was organized as the Anti-Defamation Council of Minnesota — to combat prejudice in whatever form it may take, to educate the public as to what is meant by a pluralistic society, and to help the unfortunate no matter who they are or where they are.

JCRC/ADL-sponsored Rally for Soviet Jewry, University of Minnesota St. Paul Campus, ca 1980.




JCRC/ADL booth at the Minnesota State Fair, ca 1980s.

# CHAPTER 6

## The Jewish Family Service

The Jewish Family Service received full beneficiary status from the UJFC in 1977, but the history of the agency and its service to the Saint Paul Jewish community actually began over sixty-five years earlier, on December 23, 1910. Although at that time the agency had a different name, Jewish Charities of Saint Paul, its goals have remained essentially the same: "... the relief and prevention of want and pauperism among the Jews of the city of Saint Paul, to aid the sick, the aged, the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the delinquent, and by proper means to prevent want, distress and delinquency."

Over the years, certain of these goals have taken precedence over others, as reflected in the several different names the agency has had. In 1920, the agency became known as the Jewish Welfare Association when its emphasis shifted from outright charity to social services. In the 1940s, its name was changed to the present Jewish Family Service, once again reflecting a change in its focus — assistance to troubled individuals and families. The history of the Jewish Family Service and the name changes it has undergone in many ways reflect the growth and development of Saint Paul's Jewish community.

### I

The motivation for the founding of Jewish Charities of Saint Paul was the need to bring together under the aegis of one organization all the varied Jewish charitable organizations that had developed in the community. It was to be Saint Paul Jewry's first attempt at federation, and the concept underlying its establishment is the same as that underlying the UJFC: to bring order out of chaos of Jewish fund-raising. By 1910, thirty-one organizations were raising funds for Jewish causes; all were competing for the same dollar, and many were overlapping in services. It was the goal of the incorporators of Jewish Charities that it would become the sole collector and distributor of funds. The agency was intended to represent the entire spectrum of Saint Paul Jewry; however, the signers of its papers of incorporation were all from the German Jewish community.

To place the new agency on a firm, professional foundation, a trained social worker, Miss Anne M. Palier of New York City, was hired to be its superintendent. This is the first instance in Saint Paul of someone other than a volunteer overseeing one of its Jewish charitable organizations. To facilitate offering its services, Miss Palier divided the agency into three departments: 1. family welfare; 2. child welfare; and 3. educational health work.

As could be expected, the new agency encountered resistance from some organizations. One group in particular, the Jewish Relief Society, that was not overly pleased represented Mount Zion Temple, ironically the congregation of a number of the agency's incorporators and Board. This society, still actively dispensing relief to poor Jews over forty years after its founding as the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society, preferred not having to give up its autonomy to another agency; nevertheless, after negotiations, a compromise was reached. The Board of Jewish Charities agreed that the Jewish Relief Society could remain distinct from its agency but asked in return that the women cooperate with the new superintendent. To ensure that cooperation, three women from the Relief Society were appointed to the Jewish Charities Board. The rift appeared healed, but it was temporary, for two years later Miss Palier resigned as superintendent, citing lack of cooperation between organizations as the cause.

**"Come All You Jewish Mothers. We Sing A Song To You." Sophie Wirth Camp, 1934.**

Sophie Wirth Camp, mothers and children, 1937.

A new superintendent was hired, Miss Helen Grodinsky, who was to remain at her post for thirty-one years. Five years after her arrival, and only after a great deal of diplomatic negotiating, Miss Grodinsky finally convinced all the major Jewish charitable organizations in Saint Paul to turn their receipts over to the Jewish Charities, who would distribute the funds.

At this time, Jewish Charities had two responsibilities: the collection and distribution of all Jewish charitable funds, and providing Jewish social services. Its dual purpose generally led to confusion over what indeed was its primary responsibility. Because the superintendent was a social worker, social services, such as job training and homemaking classes, often were given precedence. For example, Neighborhood House was one of the agency's first major beneficiaries. In addition, the agency provided aid to national Jewish service organizations, such as the National Jewish Hospital for Consumptives in Denver, the Jewish Orphan Asylum in Cleveland, and the National Farm School in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, institutions that from time to time were called on to assist Jewish families from Saint Paul. In addition, Miss Grodinsky encouraged cooperation with national Jewish immigration agencies such as the Industrial Removal Office and the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigration Aid Society, organizations that encouraged families to leave the crowded ghettoes of the Eastern seaboard cities for more comfortable lives in the Upper Midwest.

An important milestone in the history of Jewish Charities was reached in 1920 when the agency was invited to become a constituent organization of the newly formed Saint Paul Community Chest. That the Community Chest's first president was a Jew may explain why the agency was invited to participate. The question of affiliation with the Community Chest was put to the Jewish community; after much discussion the agency's board agreed to join. Jewish Charities would relinquish its responsibility for raising funds; instead, this duty would be undertaken by the Community Chest with input from Jewish Charities regarding its outlay. The agency's first budget request to the Community Chest was for $15,000; it was quickly approved and accepted.

The relationship between the agency and the Community Chest was not always to be as amiable as their first encounter. Over the years there would be periods of conflict, but the link remained intact, although it underwent many transformations.

One other important milestone reached in 1920 was symbolized by a change in the agency's name; it was to be known as the Jewish Welfare Association (JWA). The use of the term "charities," suggesting the giving of financial and material aid to the needy, no longer reflected the agency's primary goal. The emphasis was now on an

expanded scope of social service programs. Writing in 1922, Miss Grodinsky notes the important change in the agency's goals that prompted the need for a new name:

> today, relief, while much more adequately provided for by those who must be aided, is a subsidiary part of a larger and more constructive program. We now aim to prevent dependency where possible, rather than to relieve dependency....

The agency was announcing in effect a change in focus; no longer did it view itself as having two responsibilities of equal importance. The raising and distribution of funds was now the responsibility of the Community Chest; this policy allowed the agency to concentrate its energies on a single goal: providing the Jewish community with much needed social services.

The change in the role of the agency from charity to service was not immediately clear to the Jewish community; reports written by Miss Grodinsky and published in the **American Jewish World** attempted to dispel any doubts. One of her reports, published in 1923, succinctly describes the history of the agency and prophetically (and as will be seen, accurately) looks to its future.

> The organization has passed through two stages of development in the twelve years of its existence. First, the remedial, relieving those in distress and disregarding the causes. Second, the curative, which goes considerably further and attempts to ascertain the causes for dependency and other maladjustments and so far as possible find a cure. Now [we are] in the midst of a third stage — the preventative, which is the fundamental basis on which to build a community program. It deals with the family as a unit and seeks to prevent breakdown in the life of the family by timely service. This is the most difficult stage to develop.

A brief examination of changes in the allocation of the agency's funds reflects this change in emphasis. In 1911, only 12% of the budget went to salaries; the remainder was used to provide financial or material aid to the needy. In 1923, 45% of the budget went to salaries, indicating an increase in professional services and a decrease in outright charity. At about this same time, another problem confronting the agency was addressed and solved. Its relationship with the Community Chest was causing the agency to lose its identity within the Jewish community. Jews were encouraged to give to the Community Chest, and a number of German Jews in particular held responsible positions on its board, but many people felt this policy was not the same as giving to a recognizable Jewish charity. The problem was resolved when the JWA Board decided to make its agency a separate, permanent organization with an open, dues-paying membership.

## II

The next two challenges to the Jewish Welfare Association were the Great Depression and World War II. Not for the first time or the last, the agency found itself in a position of having to redefine and reevaluate its goals. External events, often unexpected, required that the staff remain flexible and able to cope with what at times appeared to be a see-sawing of priorities. Such was the case throughout the decades of the 1930s and 1940s. Miss Grodinsky's plans for the agency's third stage of development, prevention, had to be temporarily shelved.

The Depression generated large-scale government intervention into private social services in the form of provision of federal funds for basic human needs such as food and shelter. Welfare organizations like the Jewish Welfare Association found themselves having to turn to these funds, and to government-sponsored emergency relief programs, to meet the needs of their increasing clientele. In addition, the JWA encountered the equally pressing needs of trying to cope with Jewish emigrants fleeing Europe, and the Jewish community's commitment to raise funds to assist Jews overseas. Then, during the height of the Depression, the Community Chest came to the aid of the JWA by encouraging the agency to transfer sixty of its more difficult cases to the Board of Public Welfare. In addition, the Community Chest offered to pay for a Jewish worker to be placed on its board who would handle only these cases. By cutting back on its casework load, the JWA was able to save $600 a month, enabling it to keep within its limited budget.

Other demands were being made of the agency during this trying period. Requests increased for particular types of social service. For example, a special housekeeper was hired to instruct mothers on how to take care of their homes and cook proper meals; a part-time worker was added to work with young boys; and another worker was sent two mornings a week to the Jewish Educational Center to do vocational guidance work.

During World War II, the agency again shelved its own agenda to answer the needs of the community. Trained personnel were now scarce and the

caseload had to be lessened, even though the numbers that required assistance continued to increase. This increase was due to the impact the war was having on the family unit. Fathers were drafted, mothers often had to find work outside the home, and juvenile delinquency increased. In a report written in 1943 it was noted that "where for a number of years we have had no delinquencies, during the past six months we have already had five or six brought into Juvenile Court ... the fact that any Jewish boys were brought into Juvenile Court indicates a general unrest."

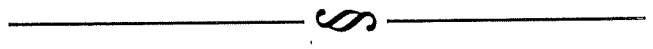
In the midst of this period of "unrest," Helen Grodinsky suffered a serious illness and had to resign as the agency's director. A former worker paid her a remarkable tribute: "She had tremendous foresight and ability, even though she ran her office with an iron hand and an iron heart.... She was actually the forerunner and inspiration of the United Jewish Fund." At the time of Miss Grodinsky's resignation, the newly created UJFC was looking for a director. The Board of the Jewish Welfare Association thus went ahead and opened discussions with the UJFC's board regarding the possibility of having an overall director for both organizations. But for unknown reasons, an agreement could not be reached. The JWA, therefore, hired a successor of its own for Miss Grodinsky, Mrs. Ethel Stein, who remained at the post for three years; she was followed by Joseph L. Taylor who was director until 1957.

## III

After the war, the Jewish Welfare Association found itself once again in the position of having to redefine its goals. It was now possible to reconsider the third stage of its development, first proposed by Miss Grodinsky in 1923, "to prevent breakdown in the life of the family." The agency underwent another name change that would appropriately reflect its new emphasis: the Jewish Family Service. A Homemakers' Service was started to help families with children where the mother had died or was incapacitated; foster home care was sought for those situations where the Homemaker Service failed. The agency became actively involved in the selection of adoptive homes for Jewish children, and, at the other end of the age-scale, began addressing problems related to the treatment of the chronically ill aged.

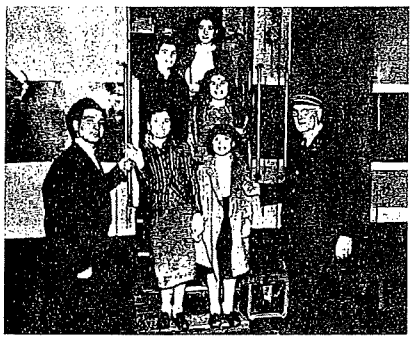
Another pressing need, however, was going to require most of the staff's attention — displaced persons. Following World War II and the entry into the United States of a number of Jewish Holocaust survivors, the Saint Paul Refugee Service Committee decided it could expedite the settlement of refugees best by merging with the JFS. The JF assumed full responsibility for the newcomers, i cluding providing them, when necessary, with nancial assistance for five years to prevent the deportation. The money for refugee aid can from the UJFC, but funds for the rest of the age cy's clientele were still provided by the Comm nity Chest. The Community Chest expressed i displeasure with the policy of the JFS in doir what the former regarded as immigration work l helping displaced persons overseas. Since th UJFC was paying the costs for this service, th JFS board felt the Community Chest had no rig to complain; however, a strain developed in th relationship between the Community Chest ar the JFS. It was becoming evident that the JF board felt the restrictions placed upon it by th Community Chest were preventing it from "mai tain[ing] effective standards of service."

By the mid 1950s the need for a refugee rese tlement program had diminished, and the agen began to see more families that represented cross-section of Saint Paul's Jewish community. 1955 the agency reported it had served appro: mately 10% of all the Jewish families in Sai Paul. As a result in the change in its clientele, th JFS again found itself in a position where it had plan and implement new programs. To pay f these new services, which for the first time we going to serve a primarily middle-class clientel the JFS began to consider the option of fee char ing. In 1953 a motion before the Board w adopted: "fee charging for counseling will be e tablished by the agency."



> "Question: *What kinds of services did you provide (refugees) at the time?*
> Answer: *"Well, mostly monetary, I would say. Place some ... get them a room someplace. ... Everybody had to work together. Everybody had their own work to do. One couldn't get along without the other. The difficult part was to get them to agree."*
>
> Past President, United Jewish Fund

# 500th Jewish DP Arrives in St. Paul



Top: The Ackou family alights from the train at Union Depot. They have arrived at their new home in the Land of Hope.

Lower: Sam Ackou, 19, the bread-winner of the family, discusses job opportunities with the director of the Jewish Vocational Service.

Sam Ackou makes friends with other members of the Young Adult Club at the Jewish Educational Center.

## COMMUNITY AIDS IN RESETTLEMENT

This is the story of the Ackous. Why tell this particular story? Because Mrs. Ackou, a widow with five minor children, became the 500th Jewish Displaced Person to reach St. Paul in the community's post-war efforts to rescue the Jews of Europe.

Their resettlement complicated by the absence of a father and breadwinner who was killed by the Nazis, their only possessions a few articles which were packed in one suitcase, and speaking only Greek, Mrs. Rosa Ackou and her family presented a dramatic story in local resettlement history.

Today, a few months after their arrival, Sam, age 19, is taking his father's place in supporting the family, they are comfortably housed in a five-room apartment, health problems are on the mend, and the children are making up for lost years. The Ackous stand out as a symbol of the strength and character of Jewish refugees and as a successful example of how the Jewish social agencies of St. Paul join to give new lives to New Americans.

Top: A caseworker from the Jewish Family Service talks over with Mrs. Ackou needs of the family and helps make plans for meeting those needs.

Lower: Mrs. Milton Firestone, Chairman of the Tutoring Service of the Council of Jewish Women, gives the Ackou girls their first lessons in English.

How this is done provides an exciting tale of community cooperation, with agencies, organizations and individuals combining their resources and energies to give victims of war and oppression a new start in life.

Even before the arrival of the Ackous, plans were underway. As for all Displaced Persons, first and foremost, their must be shelter . . not only a roof overheads, but a home, humble perhaps but a home . . a place where one may enjoy privacy, for the first time in the many years of sharing crowded quarters with other D.P.'s. The Jewish Family Service found that home—a pleasant apartment, and with the help of the Council of Jewish Women, the rooms were simply but comfortably furnished.

Soon after, the train carrying the family pulled in at Union Depot. Tired and disheveled from their long, 6,000-mile journey, Mrs. Ackou, with her excited children clustered about her, managed to muster a weary, yet happy, smile for the Jewish Family Service caseworker who greeted them.

After several days of rest, the Ackous were ready to begin planning for the future. The caseworker discussed with Mrs. Ackou and Sam the needs of the family, and an overall plan on the basis of what each member of the family needed physically and psychologically was developed, and steps were taken to carry out these plans.

Although still a child, it fell upon Sam's shoulder to carry the economic responsibility for his mother and younger sisters. The Jewish Vocational Service counsellor helped Sam locate his first job in America. He later was encouraged to resume his education the way many immigrants had done in the past—at the Mechanic Arts High School Night Classes.

The mother and younger children were eager to be like their American neighbors, with whom they had no way of communicating. The next logical and necessary step was, therefore, the learning of the English language. Back to school trooped the Ackou family, but the schoolroom was located in the offices of the Jewish Vocational Service, and the teachers were the Council of Jewish Women volunteers, whose Service to Foreign Born includes an organized English-tutoring program for newcomers.

And so life begins to take on new meaning and new hope in a new land.

Sam, despite work and school, finds time to be an active member of the Young Adult Club in the Jewish Community Center where he makes the kind of friendships which are important to every boy and girl.

The other children, Bertini, Mary, Evelyn, and Stella, ages 9, 11, 13, and 15, recaptured a few weeks of carefree youth this summer at Herzl Camp. Good food, sunshine and a happy time with children their own age made childhood more than a word to the Ackou girls.

Living on such close terms with others their age, the girls learned English quickly, and as a result they entered a higher grade in school than they otherwise would. The two older girls are in Mechanic Arts High School, and the younger ones are in Franklin grade school.

The Ackous stick together as a family and each member takes pride in the accomplishments of the others. Running a household with five children in a strange land is hard work for Mrs. Ackou but, she says, the promise the United States holds for her children is well worth the labor.

This then is the story of the Ackous. It is a story which begins, over and over again, as the Joint Distribution Committee starts innumerable families on their way out of war-torn Europe . . . as the United Service for New America meets these families at the docks of New York and speeds them on their way to the local communities . . . and as the local communities, through its agencies and organizations, assumes the final responsibility for restoring hope, dignity, and self-sufficiency to New Americans.

*Your Contribution to the United Jewish Fund and Council makes these services possible*

**Keynoter** page, October, 1951, page 3. "500th Jewish DP Arrives in St. Paul."

The JFS requested that the Community Chest allow it to use the fees to supplement staff salaries. All agency salaries were controlled by the Community Chest; on the average, JFS social workers were earning $1,000 a year less than professionals in similar positions employed by the city. The director's salary was also less than that received by other local Jewish social work executives. The Community Chest, however, denied the request, thereby increasing the tension between the agencies. In addition to the issue of salaries, the two boards differed on the need for new programs; the Community Chest refused to provide the necessary funds to implement any of the programs proposed by the JFS. It wasn't until the 1960s that the tension was eased somewhat when the Community Chest provided the JFS with several budget increases; in doing so the board of the Community Chest said the program of the JFS had its "respect and goodwill."

The decade of the 1960s with its protest and unrest brought related social and psychological disorders to the agency for resolution. The complex nature of these social ills required that the agency maintain a well-trained and well-paid staff; as a result, over 60% of the agency's budget went to staff salaries. The president of the board justified this high percentage outlay to salaries by observing that: "It is my personal opinion that the consistent high quality of staff has been the single most important factor contributing to the positive growth and performance of the Jewish Family Service of Saint Paul."

The need for a well-trained staff is obvious when the problems, the resultant programs begun, and the services rendered by the JFS in the 1960s are reviewed. The problems were manifold: juvenile delinquency and illegitimate Jewish births were on the rise; gangs were appearing in the Highland area; and concern about interdating and intermarriage was increasing, as were the number of disturbed teen-agers. Also, the steadily growing number of elderly made up a large portion of the caseload. Negotiations concerning the role of the JFS in the operation of the Jewish Home for the Aged and the Sholom Residence — the other Jewish institution for the elderly in Saint Paul, which later merged with the JHA to become the Sholom Home, Inc. — was a constant time-consuming issue.

The JFS developed a wide variety of programs to respond to these problems. Examples include a premarital counseling and an adolescent adjustment program at Mount Zion Temple and a four-part lecture series held for parents of teen-agers.

Responses were also made to the call for increased social action on the part of the agency. Ways were explored to assist Jewish mentally retarded in the community. A "meals on wheels" program was initiated for the elderly; a study was conducted on how best to aid Jewish patients in the Hastings State Mental Hospital reenter community life.

By the end of the decade, JFS recognized that the most productive way it could assist the community was through its outreach programs. Helen Grodinsky's "preventative stage" could once again begin in earnest; the agency's new goal was "to prevent family breakdown and to achieve positive family development," a statement almost identical to one made by Miss Grodinsky 45 years earlier. Finally, what Miss Grodinsky described as "this most difficult stage" could be developed.

## IV

As the Saint Paul Jewish community continued to gray in the postwar years, the number of related problems increased. By 1971, 50% of JFS's caseload was working with the aged. From 1969 to 1974, the JFS assumed the major responsibility for coordinating and offering direct service to the new Highland Park High Rise for the Aged; the service was available to all residents regardless of religion. During this same period, the JFS joined with the UJFC in considering how to serve best aged Jews still living in the deteriorating Selby-Dale and West Side neighborhoods. It was decided that the best solution would be to help them sell their homes and move elsewhere. This effort was apparently successful; of the 69 names compiled from both neighborhoods in 1970, only five were left in the Selby-Dale area in 1974. In addition, one year after the Jewish Home for the Aged and the Sholom Residence merged in 1971 to become the Sholom Home, Inc., the UJFC agreed to fund a position for a JFS caseworker at the Home. Additional services to the aged included a one-year pilot project, the Homemaker Service Program funded by UJFC, that in its first three months assisted 21 people.

The JFS, while continuing to recognize and respond to the needs of the aged, was concerned that it would become identified as an agency that dealt only with elderly clients. Programs had to be initiated that would encourage families and young people to once again look to the agency for assistance. In 1976, the new Executive Director, Sidney Hurwitz, developed a Jewish Family Life Education Program. A coordinator was appointed whose function it was to set up a series of educational meetings in the community on a variety of topics including parent-teen concerns, aging parents and heart patients and their families. Also at this

time the JFS began providing social work service to the Talmud Torah.

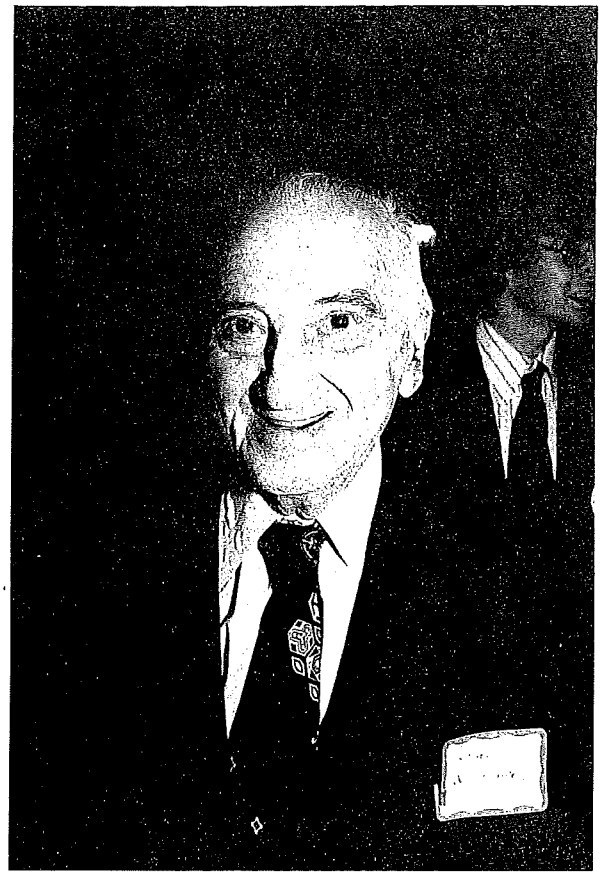
Budgetary difficulties continued to be a source for concern to the agency; the Community Chest, now known as United Way, remained very conservative in allotting money for salaries. One result was a turnover in the agency's staff and Executive Director; between 1957 and 1976, the agency had four different directors. In 1976 one professional position was terminated and the remaining staff agreed to forgo salary increases to keep the agency functioning. The shortage of funds also limited the agency in what it could accomplish in the community; and the blame for the fund shortage was attributed to the Community Chest's conservative attitude toward funding new programs. As early as 1949, it was noted in the JFS board's minutes that the problems the JFS had with the Community Chest and its funding policies could be traced back to differences in the two organizations' philosophies regarding services to the needy.

> for a variety of reasons, among them centuries old religious and cultural traditions around social services, Jewish agencies must maintain higher standards of service which are reflected in higher costs.

Continued concern over the quality of service and the morale of the staff prompted the board of the JFS to turn to the UJFC for assistance. For years the board had avoided requesting help from the UJFC, for fear it would jeopardize its funding from the United Way; however, when in 1977 the JFS received full beneficiary status from the UJFC, the United Way still granted the agency its full allotment.

Beginning in 1973, the JFS became involved with the program to resettle Soviet Jews in Saint Paul; a Russian Resettlement Committee was formed under the auspices of the JFS. The committee worked in concert with the Jewish Vocational Service and received funding from UJFC. While the Jewish Vocational Service attempted to find suitable employment for the newcomers, the JFS Resettlement Committee subcontracted language classes with the International Institute for English language training, and worked with volunteers from the local section of the National Council of Jewish Women to assist the Russians in other aspects of resettlement. The effort turned out to be more difficult than initially expected and, as a result, in 1979 the Russian Resettlement Committee was placed under the aegis of the UJFC, providing it with a broader community emphasis. In addition to resettling Russian Jewry, the JFS also assisted twelve Vietnamese.

The Jewish Family Service, under the continued directorship of Sidney Hurwitz, has maintained its important position in the community by



Soviet immigrant at a Welcome Party for new immigrants.

*"... to be called a greenhorn was a big insult to us. Like newcomers now, refugees now, no matter how long they have been here, maybe 25 years, people are still calling them refugees."*

providing essential social services to individuals and families in need. Its educational and outreach programs fulfill Helen Grodinsky's challenge of over sixty years ago, the need to act to prevent breakdown in the family. In her words:

> the real welfare of the community ... depended not upon the temporary furnishings of physical needs, but upon a greater measure of personal service out of which would grow healthier, self-supporting citizens.

**Picnic at Jack Butwin Camp, 1975. Soviet immigrants entertain at a Welcome Party.**

# CHAPTER 7

## The Jewish Vocational Service

In the summer of 1945, a headline in the **Keynoter** announced the formation of a new Jewish agency: "Vocational Guidance and Placement Service Program to be Instituted: Fund Board Approves Plans for New Agency." The article states that the new agency, to be known as the Jewish Vocational Placement Service (later to become the Jewish Vocational Service), will provide vocational guidance and placement and will supplant the former Jewish Placement Service. Dr. Solomon Shapiro, formerly associated with the Milwaukee Jewish Vocational Service, was named the new agency's first director. He remained in this position until 1964, when he resigned and was replaced by Benjamin Lasoff, the current Executive Director of JVS.

The Jewish Placement Service was a program of the Jewish Welfare Association. It began on a small scale in 1939 when the JWA hired a part-time vocational counselor. Apparently a need was being met, for in 1942 the United Jewish Fund allocated $700 for a Jewish Placement Service and $100 for a vocational guidance program. But this program was not Saint Paul Jewry's first attempt to provide this type of service to its community. The history of vocational services can be traced back to the arrival of the first Eastern European Jewish immigrants in Saint Paul in the 1880s and 1890s.

### I

With the arrival of large numbers of Yiddish-speaking immigrants into the city, the established Jewish community quickly recognized the need to find the newcomers suitable employment for them to become productive members of the community. Many of the immigrants were unskilled and therefore unsuited for most available jobs. The Jewish community decided that some type of "industrial school" had to be developed where marketable skills could be taught. The Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society of Mount Zion Temple and the local section of the National Council of Jewish Women cosponsored an industrial school that opened in rented rooms on Fairfield Avenue in the spring of 1895. The school's initial enrollment was young women who were taught homemaking skills and industrial arts such as dressmaking. A boys' manual training department was added in 1897, and soon after, classes were extended to adults as well. By 1899, a day nursery, supported by the four major Jewish women's organizations in Saint Paul, was begun; it was intended to free mothers to work to supplement family incomes. An employment bureau was operated in connection with the nursery, but both efforts proved unsuccessful; Jewish mothers were reluctant to leave their children. The failure of this project did not discourage Jewish organizations from continuing their efforts to prepare immigrants for employment. For example, the local B'nai B'rith lodge in conjunction with synagogue auxiliaries assisted in the placement of immigrants. B'nai B'rith in particular worked closely with the Industrial Removal Office located in New York City and with the Galveston Movement organized by Jacob Schiff, two groups that were actively seeking to settle Jewish immigrants in the Midwest and Western regions of the country.

Another effort that proved successful was undertaken by the successor of the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society, the Jewish Relief Society. The society maintained rooms in the Union Block where women volunteers ran an "employment bureau"; by 1907 over two hundred men and women had found employment through the efforts of the bureau. In the following decades employment efforts continued to be conducted by volunteers associated with various Jewish organizations; however, the community did not attempt a coordinated vocational effort, nor were professionals hired to assist the volunteers. It wasn't until the waning years of the Depression that the need for professional vocational services was recognized.

In 1939, the JWA noted a "definite need" among Jewish youth for vocational guidance. A JWA worker was assigned two mornings a week to the Jewish Educational Center to test young men and women to "direct them to proper vocational schools." In 1940 the JWA board considered the question of forming a vocational advisory committee, stating that the "problem of guidance is greater than that of employment for young people." Later that year, in December 1940, a representative of the UJF's Junior Division proposed several activities for the division, including a vocational guidance program. Apparently this program was reviewed by the Saint Paul Council of Jewish Agencies in its role as the central planning agency for the Jewish community in the city, for in

July 1941, the council proposed that a coordinated program covering group guidance, individual counseling, job placement, and economic discrimination in employment be initiated in Saint Paul. As a result of this recommendation, it was decided that the JWA continue vocational guidance work but the UJF subsidize a Jewish employment bureau. A small budget was allocated to set up the service, including $500 for a part-time worker for six months. In the budget committee's report on this decision, the part-time worker was to be in the "anti-discrimination field," suggesting that this was one of the major difficulties confronting young Jewish people seeking suitable employment.

The need for some form of Jewish vocational service continued to occupy the attention of the UJF in 1942. At that time money was allocated for what was now called the Jewish Placement Service, including a separate budget for a vocational guidance program. Nothing further was done in this area during the years of World War II. Undoubtedly the drafting of young men cut down the need for a placement service, and jobs were readily available for women seeking employment. With the end of the war, however, the issue once again became paramount to the Jewish community.

In January 1945, the Chairman of the Vocational Guidance Committee of the B'nai B'rith Women District Lodge No. 6 appeared before the board of the UJFC to request the "reintroduction" of vocational facilities to the Jewish community of Saint Paul. She saw this as an endeavor to be entered into jointly by B'nai B'rith and other local agencies. Following her presentation, it was decided that the matter of vocational guidance be referred to the Social Planning Committee of the UJFC for further study. Several months later, a subcommittee on Jewish vocational service of the Social Planning Committee stated that it favored the establishment of such a service. At the June 18, 1945 board meeting of the UJFC, the chairman of the Social Planning Committee of the UJFC recommended the establishment of the Jewish Vocational and Placement Service as a new agency to replace the Jewish Placement Service "now operating on a skeleton basis." An important issue raised at the meeting was the need for creating a separate agency, a reference to the Jewish Placement Service that was part of JWA. In response, it was pointed out that no vocational services existed in Saint Paul, and the Jewish community could be a pioneer in this area — a prophetic observation. The new agency would become an independent addition to the city's Jewish communal social welfare structure with its own board of directors and budget.

II

The **Keynoter** article of June/July 1945 describes the proposed program for the new agency: "The program as approved will probably include facilities for aptitude testing, vocational guidance, educational counseling and job placement. Specific attention will be given to high school youth and returning veterans, but anyone in the community may apply for the service. The service is free."

**Jewish Vocational Service, 1947. JVS worked with B'nai B'rith to counsel students at the University of Minnesota.**

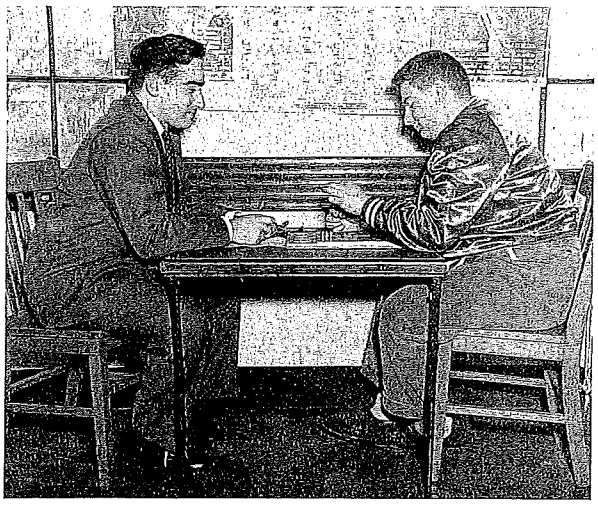
Helping young people and veterans in career planning was a primary reason that the UJFC's Social Planning Committee approved the formation of the JVS, but one other important factor not directly mentioned by the committee played a key role: discrimination in employment. An article about the JVS published in the **American Jewish World** in 1947 focuses on the role discrimination played in the formation of the agency: "The factor of anti-Semitism in the employment field created the need for an agency which would counsel the young man and woman particularly who was about to choose a life's work." Also, in a report in the February 1947 **Keynoter,** the then president of JVS identifies discrimination as one of the major vocational problems confronting Jewish youth.

> It is recognized that Jewish boys and girls seeking employment are not always considered on the same basis as others in their group. It is extremely important, therefore, that our boys and girls start off with a better than even chance of making a go of their career choice.

From these quotes, it becomes obvious that one of the major motivations for the formation of the new agency was indeed discrimination. A separate vocational agency was needed by the Jewish community to help counteract what it perceived as anti-Semitism in the job market. The JVS, how-

ever, maintained a policy that when it encountered incidents of discrimination in employment it did not deal directly with the problems; rather, they were handed over to the appropriate Jewish community relations organization. The reason cited for the agency's noninvolvement in confronting discriminatory employment practices was its desire to remain "neutral" vis-à-vis the business community.

To carry out its original mandate toward assisting youth and veterans, JVS immediately initiated three programs. The first program was part of the Veterans Service Bureau organized by the UJFC in 1945 that was to coordinate all the Jewish community's activities related to veterans. Organizations involved included the Jewish War Veterans, JWA, Jewish Educational Center, and JVS. The JVS assisted veterans in taking advantage of government-sponsored programs such as the GI Bill of Rights. Jewish veterans were given aptitude tests to channel them into professions best suited to their abilities and into places where the chances were good that they would be hired and promoted. It was known, for example, that certain professions, especially banking and insurance, would hire Jews at entry level jobs but would not promote them to higher levels of management. The JVS has continued its assistance to veterans; since the 1960s the Veterans Administration has had a contract with JVS for its services.



**Jewish Vocational Service, ca 1950. Benjamin Lasoff testing a student's skill.**

In November 1946 JVS began a second program, an experimental project designed to help young people in career planning. A **Keynoter** headline announced: "Career planning for youth objective of new program." The program is described as an "experiment in Twin Cities cooperation to provide vocational service for the organized youth groups and clubs in the Jewish community." The program was cosponsored by the JVS, B'nai B'rith lodges and auxiliaries of both cities, and the Jewish Employment and Vocational Guidance Office of Minneapolis. JVS introduced a third program in December 1946, a vocational guidance program at Hillel for veterans and other students. By February 1947, over 25% of the people who used the facilities of the JVS were high school and college students. The importance and success of the career guidance program prompted the hiring in 1948 of a special guidance counselor, Benjamin Lasoff.

The work with students and veterans was soon to be overshadowed by the needs of a third group, persons displaced by the war who were being resettled in Saint Paul. No mention is made of assisting refugees in the goals outlined by the JVS in their minutes of 1945 or 1946. Yet by March 1950, refugees were requiring almost 85% of the agency's staff time, bringing about a curtailment of services to other clients. To meet its responsibilities, the JVS requested from the UJFC funding for an additional staff person, with the understanding that should the "refugee problem" diminish, its present staff, with a part-time assistant to help out at peak periods, would be adequate. In addition, in May 1953, to cover its increasing expenses, the JVS instituted a fee charge dependent on the client's ability to pay.

The JVS joined with the Jewish Family Service and the Saint Paul Section of the National Council of Jewish Women to provide services that would hasten the integration of the refugees into the community. JVS Executive Director Solomon Shapiro described the difficulty in placing the new arrivals in jobs:

> First and foremost ... is his [the displaced person's] lack of English ... from the point of view [of] jobs and job placement until the time he begins to have some understanding of English our placement procedure is difficult indeed.

> *"... we have taken more [refugees] than other communities almost twice our size ... [and] have done the job with less money than those other communities."*
>
> **Saint Paul Jewish News,** March, 1954

The NCJW undertook the responsibility of tutoring the refugees in English, and while the tutoring was going on, the JVS would search for jobs. Certain difficulties were encountered, both in the attitude of the refugees and the attitude of potential employers. The refugees had to be reassured that jobs would be found that would make use of their skills, and employers had to be reassured that the refugee would not take a job away from a "native" employee. In a follow-up study conducted in 1950 of thirty families who arrived in 1948, Shapiro describes their adjustment as "excellent." By 1951, five hundred Jewish refugees had been resettled in Saint Paul. By 1953, the number was reduced to a trickle, owing to new federal immigration restrictions.

By 1951, the needs of the refugees began to diminish, but the declining job market brought in many seeking job placement and vocational guidance; these applicants included older and marginal workers. However, because of its preoccupation with refugees, the JVS saw one of its top priority groups diminish; by 1951, only 25% of the caseload was youth. Because of the apparent change in JVS clientele, the UJFC recommended in 1950 that the agency undergo a self-evaluation. The self-survey, published in 1952, indicated that after five years of existence, job placement and vocational guidance were still the agency's two essential services, but to meet the needs of a new clientele, three more services had to be added:

1. Greater emphasis on rehabilitation for dependent, marginal, and handicapped individuals.
2. Intensification of preventative work with youth, particularly in low income areas.
3. Further exploration of need for and feasibility of a sheltered workshop and program for the mentally retarded. It was also observed in the survey report that 6% of work done by JVS was now nonsectarian.

The JVS responded almost immediately to the call for new services, particularly in the area of rehabilitation and sheltered workshops. By October 14, 1953, an Industrial Workshop for Jewish people who had physical and/or mental problems that affected their capacity to work was incorporated as a division of JVS; it was cosponsored by JFS and the NCJW and located in the back room of the NCJW's thrift shop. The Industrial Workshop became one of the most innovative programs initiated by the JVS and received a great deal of local and national attention. It was the first workshop in the city that actively prepared its clientele for entry into the job market. The "vision" for the workshop has been attributed to Executive Director Dr. Solomon Shapiro, who had been instrumental in introducing the first concept of such a workshop in Milwaukee during his tenure in that city's Jewish Vocational Service. The success of the Milwaukee workshop encouraged him to attempt the same program in Saint Paul. The workshop opened its doors in November 1953 with eight clients and a waiting list of twenty-four. By 1955, rehabilitation clients represented one-quarter of the JVS caseload, a threefold increase since 1950. In the agency's 1958 annual report, it was reported that since its inception in 1954, the Industrial Workshop had provided training and rehabilitation to 65 people and assisted another 215. Because of the success of the endeavor, the Saint Paul Community Chest became interested in having the workshop become one of its nonsectarian beneficiary agencies. The Social Planning Committee of the UJFC agreed to allow the Community Chest to evaluate the workshop, with the result that on January 16, 1959, the **Saint Paul Jewish News** announced: "Industrial Workshop turned over to Community Chest." The workshop now became the "Community Workshop" and was open to the entire Saint Paul community; the JVS continued to provide supervision until 1965, when the workshop became part of the Saint Paul Rehabilitation Center.

Although the JVS was heavily involved in its sheltered workshop program, it did not neglect its commitment to youth; a renewed effort was made to encourage young people to make use of the agency. In 1953, the JVS published what was the first of a series of scholarship guides making the agency a community resource for financial aid information for students. Publicity announcing the agency's work with youth appeared in the local Jewish press. An editorial in the **Saint Paul Jewish News** applauds JVS for its work and encourages youth to make use of its services: "Informing a graduate about this agency may be the finest graduation gift of all...."

In addition, in 1953, the JVS instituted an annual career conference at Hillel for high school seniors. The effort to encourage young people to make use of the agency's services paid off; an increase in young clientele was noted for the years 1954-1957. Other projects directed toward young people included an experimental program with sixth to ninth graders designed to determine the effectiveness of early vocational guidance; apparently this program never survived beyond the experimental stage but it is indicative of the agency's ongoing attempts to explore various avenues to improve career guidance.

During the years 1957-1958, recession in the economy brought about placement difficulties and an increase in the need for scholarships. As a result, an expanded scholarship guide was pub-

**Jewish Vocational Service, ca 1955. Career Conclave at University of Minnesota.**

lished in November 1959; over six hundred copies were sold throughout the state. But in the years to come, the JVS was going to see a shift in its clientele from young people to the aged.

## III

In a series of articles published in 1957 in the **Saint Paul Jewish News,** Benjamin Lasoff discussed the needs and problems of the growing numbers of elderly Jews in Saint Paul that were indicated by a survey that B'nai B'rith had conducted. Lasoff suggests that the survey's findings could serve a twofold purpose:

1. To assist social, recreational, medical, religious and vocational agencies in adjusting or expanding their services;
2. To give the Minneapolis Federation and the UJFC social planning subcommittees dealing with the aged an overview of the critical problems that our Jews 65 or over face.

Dan Rosenberg, Executive Director of the UJFC, responded to Lasoff's suggestions in an article published September 20, 1957, in the **American Jewish World.** He cites two major matters of concern regarding the aged and community planning. For one, the community had to recognize that the care of the aged involved more than the automatic transfer from independent community living to institutional beds. In addition, the community should be aware of ways to prevent or slow down the physical deterioration of personality long associated with aging.

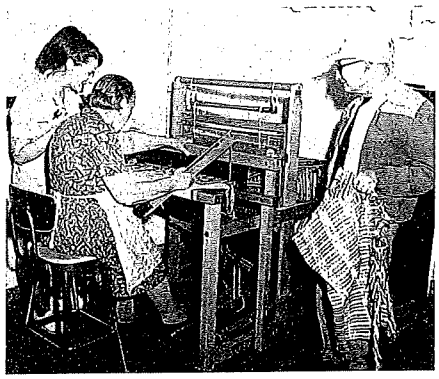
In an initial effort to address the needs of the Jewish elderly in Saint Paul, the JVS developed a one-year experimental program that would introduce a sheltered workshop at the Jewish Home for the Aged. The program was set to begin on May 13, 1959, but owing to delays the actual project did not get under way until the end of 1961. In 1965, under the name Northstar Workshop, the project became a permanent feature of the Home for the Aged. The purpose of the workshop was to provide a noncompetitive, guided paid-work experience for the residents; it was administered by JVS Executive Director Benjamin Lasoff in cooperation with Miss Frances Sains, Executive Director of the Home. The workshop remained in operation for sixteen years, until 1981, when it was terminated because of funding complexities.

**Jewish Vocational Service, 1965. Northstar Workshop at Sholom Home.**

Because of the success of the Northstar Workshop and the growing recognition of the needs of elderly people who were not residents of the Home for the Aged, the JVS, in cooperation with the NCJW and the JCC, developed the Leisure League Workshop at the JCC. The workshop began as an experimental program during the winter of 1966; members of the Leisure League met each Tuesday at the JCC to work for a small remuneration and to socialize. The workshop, funded by

> *"... we were paying sheltered workshop wages which are very minimal, and after the first week one of the men talked to the other people that were working in the workshop and he got them to go out on strike. He was a union man ... so we met with him ... and talked about the pros and cons ... and it was resolved."*

UJFC, was seen as a means of providing elderly people with a positive environment that was conducive both to socializing and to maintaining productive lives. The workshop is still in existence although it is no longer connected with the JVS.



Jewish Vocational Service, 1965. Woman being taught to use weaving machine at Northstar Workshop, Sholom Home.

Leisure League, 1969. Jewish Community Center Adult Workshop assembling Heart Fund kits.

Leisure League Workshop, 1969. Jewish Community Center.

As Saint Paul's Jewish community continued to gray, JVS responded by continuing to reevaluate its priorities. The JVS annual report of 1968 proposes that additional upgraded services to the aged be considered. Youth were not ignored and programs were introduced that addressed their specific needs; however, because of the decrease in the number of Jewish young people, the character and audience for the programs changed. The JVS found it necessary to increase its involvement in nonsectarian youth programs that were funded by government grants.

The UJFC set down certain conditions that applied if non-sectarian vocational services were to be rendered by JVS: that there be no financial risk to the agency or the UJFC, or diminution in the quality of core services, and that there be a need by the general community for the service and recognition of JVS as the most competent agency to effectively deliver the service. At times, nonsectarian services have provided upward to 50% of the agency's total budget; the remainder comes from the UJFC.

## IV

A headline in the February 18, 1966, issue of the **Saint Paul Jewish News** announced one of many nonsectarian youth programs JVS began offering in the 1960s: "J.V.S. Gets U.S. Nod. Vocational Service to Spearhead Youth Corps." The JVS was named as the sponsoring agency for the development of a neighborhood youth corps for unemployed out-of-school youth; it received a federal grant of $211,385 to administer the program. Writing about the program in a **Saint Paul Jewish News** article in August 1967, JVS Executive Director Benjamin Lasoff describes JVS's involvement in the program as being

> in the best tradition of our Judaic heritage, the JVS as sponsor ... gives aid to the poor and the stranger, not only as a charitable act, motivated by pity, but as an obligation, and as an act of justice toward the recipient, making him self-supporting and restoring his dignity. It is a matter of pride the JVS participates in the War Against Poverty and thus expresses a fundamental Jewish commitment to justice and to the poor on behalf of the Saint Paul Jewish community.

In January 1969, the JVS undertook to administer another program aimed at disadvantaged youth, aged 16 to 24. Career Opportunities Preparation for Employment (COPE), funded by the Saint Paul United Fund and administered by JVS

was established to help economically deprived young people become responsible, employable, productive citizens. As part of the project, the JVS staff began an outreach program to young people to provide individual counseling and testing, and, where needed, scholarship and financial aid.

A third major government program administered by JVS was the Career Guidance and Training Center begun in 1974 with federal funding through the city of Saint Paul under CETA (Comprehensive Employment Training Act). The program provided job placement, vocational counseling, and institutional and on-the-job training programs for needy residents aged 18 to 80. In 1983, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) replaced CETA, but it continued the goal of assisting the extremely disadvantaged in finding employment.

JVS has also been involved in other nonsectarian programs, including "Project Retain," a nationwide Jewish Occupational Council Program designed to provide placement services to the aged, disabled poor in metropolitan areas. The program was funded by the Social Rehabilitation Service of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The agency also provided case management, testing, and counseling for "hard-core unemployed" registered in the National Alliance of Businessmen-Job Opportunities in the Business Sector (NAB-JOBS) program, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Although nondenominational programs were occupying an increasing amount of the agency's time in the 1960s and early 1970s, specifically Jewish concerns were still being addressed. Career conclaves and programs for Jewish youth continued, as did individual counseling and services for those seeking vocational guidance and placement. New programs directed toward Jewish youth were introduced, including JOIN (Jewish Occupational Interns), designed to encourage Jewish young people to consider the Jewish communal service fields as a profession. The JVS was responsible for recruitment, screening, and preparing a curriculum on Jewish communal topics to be presented to youth, and to see that young persons interested in Jewish communal service received summer job placements in one of the sponsoring agencies. Another program introduced in the early 1970s was the Youth Job Placement Center, cosponsored by the JCC, that was aimed at increasing part-time and summer job opportunities for youth between the ages of 14 and 18.

Also starting in the mid 1970s, JVS, in collaboration with other Jewish agencies in Saint Paul, began assisting Soviet Jews resettling in the city, assuming the responsibility of providing the refugees with vocational guidance. Unlike previous groups who had resettled in Saint Paul, however, the latest arrivals were mostly skilled workers intent in being placed in positions comparable to those they had held in Russia. Placement was not a simple matter, however, as most of the émigrés had not mastered English and therefore were difficult to place in positions of responsibility. Furthermore, many potential employers felt the newcomers should not be treated differently from any other employee; they should start at a lower position and work themselves up to one of more responsibility. This policy was not easy for the Russians to accept, and many refused to accept positions offered to them by the JVS but still expected the community to support them until a suitable position was found.

To serve the increasing number of Soviet émigrés, plus the continuing needs of local clientele, the JVS found it necessary to increase its staff. Federal monies were made available to JVS to help fund services to Soviet Jewry, but in return the State Department requested the Jewish community to assist in the settlement of Vietnamese families. The community agreed but it was understood that the work with the Vietnamese could not interfere with the resettlement efforts of Russian Jewry. As it turned out, the Vietnamese refugees required little assistance; they were extremely self-sufficient and willing to take any type of employment.

Since the Soviet Union reversed its liberal emigration policy in early 1980, few Soviet Jews have resettled in Saint Paul. However, JVS's Russian caseload has not diminished; the recession in the early 1980s put many of the refugees out of work, and a number have had to seek reemployment.

The plight of Soviet Jewry is not the last challenge to confront JVS. The agency has faced an uncertain future since the mid 1960s when its

*"[Jewish Vocational Service] is really performing a very valuable service ... to the Jewish community. [It] ... is in some ways unique in the character of its services ... and therefore should be more properly appreciated by the community in Saint Paul."*

Jewish caseload began to diminish and it accepted an increasing load of nonsectarian programs to maintain its viability as an independent organization. In fact, some of these nonsectarian programs have not directly benefited the Jewish community, for example, those directed toward hard-core unemployed. But others have. For instance, nonsectarian programs directed toward the aged and handicapped have assisted Jews in a manner that the agency acting on its own could not. In addition, by administering these programs, the JVS has contributed to the positive image that Saint Paul Jewry has achieved within the community at large. Thus the JVS's latest challenge is to introduce and implement meaningful programs that will address the needs of a changing Jewish community. And based on its past performances — its innovative programs in the area of career guidance and its ground-breaking work in rehabilitation — there is reason to believe JVS will accept this challenge and be able to continue serving its community.

# CHAPTER 8

# Sholom Home, Inc.

The Sholom Residence became a beneficiary agency of the United Jewish Fund and Council in 1949; the Jewish Home for the Aged followed twenty years later, in 1969. Both organizations had been in existence for many years before their association with the UJFC. The Jewish Home for the Aged first began raising funds in 1890 under the auspices of the Charity Loan Society, founded at about the same time. Since their inception in about 1918, the Daughters of Abraham, the founders of the Sholom Residence, began raising funds for what was then perceived as a Jewish hospital. But it was not until 1971 that the two organizations merged to become the Sholom Home, Inc., a Jewish residence for the aged and chronically ill.

## I

The Jewish community of Saint Paul, following the establishment of cemeteries and synagogues, began to recognize the need for a facility to care for its elderly poor. The Charity Loan Society had as its primary purpose providing settlement assistance to newly arriving immigrants. However, it soon became evident that other charitable groups were accomplishing this task, rendering these efforts of the Charity Loan Society redundant. Consequently, the society's members decided to change their organization's focus and concentrate on the establishment of a much needed Jewish home for the aged. By 1903, the organization had a new name that illustrated its new purpose: The Charity Loan Society and Old Women's Home.

That the initial concern of the new organization was aged women is understandable; its founders were women sensitive to the plight of the destitute widow in a male-dominated society. The Society's membership organized and held fund-raising events for the proposed home and within five years had raised $2,000, no small sum in 1908. The money was used as a down payment on an old mansion located at 75 Wilkin Street. That the home was not located near a Jewish neighborhood was not a major concern; providing a haven for the elderly poor took precedence. The opening of the doors of the home culminated efforts begun eighteen years earlier by the women of the Charity Loan Society. In the intervening years, the women were able to change the focus of their organization and lay the foundation for the establishment of the Jewish Home for the Aged that was to become one of the most important and vitally needed institutions in the Twin Cities.

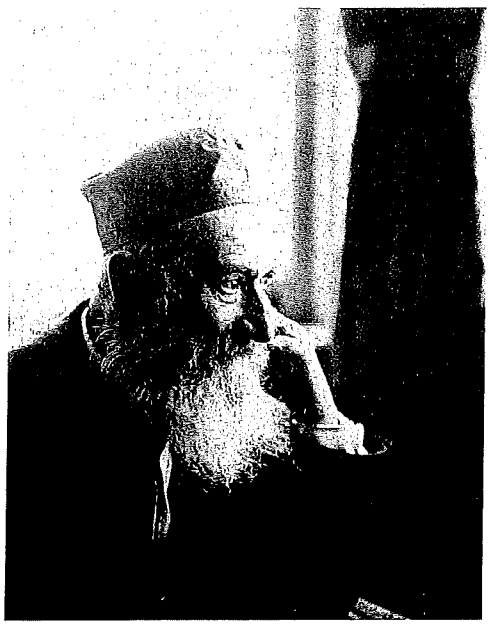
A great deal of the credit for the success of this endeavor must be given to one woman in particular, Mary Burton, a descendant of the first group of Eastern European Jewish immigrants to settle in Saint Paul. Through her resourcefulness, and that of other women like her, the Jewish Home for the Aged came into being. But once a reality, the home was dominated by male leadership. Although all but one member of the first board of directors for the new home were men, women organized an auxiliary that was responsible for seeing that the policy decisions handed down by the board were carried out and raised funds to cover the home's operating costs.

The home's clientele was to be the poor, elderly members of the Orthodox community, men and women; its bylaws state in part that the purpose of the home is: "to provide and maintain in accordance with the traditions and doctrines of orthodox Judaism a Home for Aged Jewish Persons who are homeless or destitute...." But even though the home's clientele was to be only Orthodox (therefore Eastern European Jews), German Jews did provide it with support. This early example of cooperation between the Reform and Orthodox communities in Saint Paul was on a purely philanthropic level. The cultural and social separation that still existed between the two groups is evident in a statement made by Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut: "The German group considered the sending of its aged to any institution socially inadmissible."

The board set up the home's admission requirements and the first "inmates," the term then in vogue for residents, were admitted on June 14, 1908. The first group included eight men and women who agreed to a cash payment of $200 to the home plus any property or assets they owned. These requirements could be waived if the applicant was destitute; however, they were to become an ongoing point of contention between the board of the home and the Jewish community.

The board also expected the residents to conform to certain regulations, including the need "to show proper respect to the Superintendent ... [and to] render such services to the Home or its inmates as is required of them by the Superintendent [as well as] retire to their rooms at 9 PM." The regulations, as degrading as they may now appear, were commonplace in homes for the aged at

the time. Sensitivity to the residents' feelings was not a major concern; an efficiently run home was the main object.



**Jewish Home for the Aged, ca 1925.** ***Photo: Norton & Peel. From the Collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.***

The women in the auxiliary did not always adhere to the admission rules set down by the board. It is known, for example, that at times, rather than wait for the board's approval on certain applicants, auxiliary members would take it on themselves to move some people into the home. But the board had little cause to complain about the auxiliary; the women continued to take on the enormous task of raising funds to cover the home's expenses. A variety of fund-raising affairs were held, including a gala Purim Ball that became one of the grand social events in the Jewish community.

By 1908 the home had twenty residents, its capacity, and an annual budget of about $9,000. According to the 1913 **Directory of Charitable and Benevolent Organizations in Saint Paul,** "the rooms are pleasant, well lighted and handsomely furnished. There is a synagogue which, with the rooms, has been furnished in memory of departed friends by wealthy Jewish people. The grounds surrounding are spacious, shaded by trees and well kept." Despite this glowing report, three years later the State Fire Marshall condemned the Wilkin Street home.

The board and members of the auxiliary were faced with a major challenge. The old home could not be renovated, so a major fund-raising drive would have to be initiated to build a new one. Plans were announced in October 1916 to construct a $200,000 building in the Midway area or Como near Snelling. Like the Wilkin Street home the site was not near a Jewish neighborhood bu may have been selected to encourage Minneapoli participation in fund-raising: it was touted as be ing located midway between the two cities. The new home would not limit its clientele to Sain Paul Jewry but would accept applicants from else where in the state and from the entire upper Mid west. After three years of intensive fund-raising enough money was available to lay the building' foundation; however, further funds were urgentl needed to complete construction. Four years later in 1922, enough money was finally collected s that the cornerstone could be laid. The new hom opened its doors in October 1923, seven years af ter the Wilkin Street building was condemned.

**Jewish Home for the Aged. Women, ca 1925, wearing required white aprons and caps.** ***From the Collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.***

It isn't clear why the home had such difficulties raising funds for its new facilities. Obviously it fulfilled a need in the community, but disagreement as to the parameters of that need may have existed. Such differences of opinion are evident by the efforts begun around 1918 by the Daughters of Abraham, an organization of women of Eastern

> *"The women will wear white aprons each day except while at work, and the men will wear black skull caps."*
>
> First Annual Report, 1909

European Jewish heritage, to raise funds for a Twin Cities Jewish hospital. They were responding to the policy of the Jewish Home for the Aged of refusing to admit patients who were infirm or chronically ill. No kosher facility in the Twin Cities could house these people; thus a need was seen and women once again tried to remedy the need. The two organizations, the Jewish Home for the Aged and the Daughters of Abraham, began their major fund-raising efforts at precisely the same time, and each was competing for the same dollar during a period when the nation was experiencing a general economic decline. What apparently occurred is that the two groups infringed on each other's effort, with the result that both had difficulty achieving their goals.

Fund-raising for the Jewish Home for the Aged did not stop after the new Home was completed. Board members went out into the community to solicit additional support, including donations from the Reform community, which had curtailed its involvement in Jewish affairs during and immediately after World War I. The women's auxiliary, now split into two groups representing Minneapolis and Saint Paul, continued its efforts and even organized a Junior Auxiliary composed of younger Jewish women who were expected to "assist in financing and maintaining of the Jewish Home for the Aged and to promote the comfort and welfare of the inmates of the Home." Attendance of over 1,000 people at the auxiliaries' 1928 Purim Ball is evidence of the popularity the balls enjoyed in the 1920s. The funds raised were intended to cover the expenses of the 40 "inmates" now housed in the home.

Not long before the doors of the new home opened in 1923, a new source of financial support appeared, the Saint Paul Community Chest. The Jewish Home for the Aged immediately became a beneficiary agency of the Community Chest when the latter was formed in 1920. According to a report published by the Community Chest in 1935, the Jewish Home for the Aged received a total of $62,459.79 between 1920 and 1935, far more than any other ethnic sponsored home for the aged in Saint Paul. Community Chest support continued through the Depression years when the Jewish community was hard-pressed to meet all its financial obligations and supplied the only outside funds the Home would accept. The home's board continued to resist offers of assistance, financial and professional, from local Jewish welfare or social service organizations, apparently for fear it would lose its autonomy.

During the 1930s some improvements could be seen in the attitude of the home's board and employees toward the residents. During this period the term "inmate" was replaced by the more humane term "resident." The Jewish Welfare Association began supplementing the board's investigation of applicants, thereby introducing a level of professionalism into the procedure. Other indications of improvement in the home's management include the addition of more professional staff and an increased sensitivity to the resident's mental as well as physical condition. The board of the Jewish Home for the Aged, however, was slow in accepting change and would have preferred to continue the status quo, which from their viewpoint was quite satisfactory. Many of the board's members had been firmly entrenched for years and were unable or unwilling to see the true condition of the home and how outdated its methods were in the treatment of the elderly.

A communal study conducted in 1936 sums up the situation fairly well.

> The Home is clean, quiet and orderly. The atmosphere is decidedly institutional despite the two-bed rooms. At the time of the visit two men were reading sacred books, two women were engaged in mending, a few were chatting in one hallway, a few walking aimlessly about, and the others were asleep or lying in bed.

The study recommended that the home develop a program for chronically ill aged; strengthen its medical and nursing facilities; form a committee with the United Jewish Fund, the Minneapolis Federation, and the two Jewish Family Services in the Twin Cities; more fully utilize casework services; develop recreational and occupational activities; and make an attempt to coordinate its planning. That the board of the home chose to ignore all the suggestions can be seen in a second study made twenty years later, which made similar recommendations.

Several attempts were made in the 1940s to pro-

> *"There [are] also ... two sun parlors and living rooms where the old folks may sit about and while their hours away."*
>
> **American Jewish World,** October, 1922

vide the residents with some type of recreation. For example, the "chief" Orthodox rabbi of Lowertown, J.B. Hurvitz, held weekly discussions with the residents, movies were shown on occasion, and sewing projects were introduced. These few efforts are evidence that the board recognized the need for such activities, but apparently did not put a high priority on them.

Other more critical questions confronting the board still needed to be resolved, particularly the treatment of the chronically ill. An attempt at full-time nursing care was introduced, but the home lacked any type of medical facility where the residents could receive proper treatment. The board was well aware of the problems the home had in treating the chronically ill, and at one point did go to the Social Planning Committee of the UJFC to discuss establishing adequate medical facilities, but apparently the issue was shelved.

A kosher home for the chronically ill had been the ongoing goal of the Daughters of Abraham since their inception in 1918. The women did not immediately raise the funds to construct a building, but this delay did not discourage them from continuing in their effort. By 1947, they had about $18,000 in their treasury, and offered the money to the home if it would build an infirmary for the treatment of residents and needy nonresidents. If that arrangement was unacceptable, the women requested that they be permitted to support three rooms in the home's infirmary for the admission of non-home residents. For undocumented reasons, the Jewish Home for the Aged turned down both of the women's requests. As a consequence, the Daughters of Abraham purchased a home at 45 South Saint Albans, an established Jewish neighborhood, and converted it for use as a home for the chronically ill; they named it the Sholom Residence.

## II

The Sholom Residence was small compared with the Jewish Home for the Aged. In 1949, the Residence had twenty patients, the same number the Jewish Home for the Aged had when it opened its doors in 1908; however, by 1951 the Jewish Home for the Aged had increased its capacity to 104 residents. Like the women who worked so hard to establish the Home, the Daughters of Abraham raised the funds to open the Sholom Residence and then turned over the reins to an all-male board. The women's auxiliary, however, was large and powerful, numbering over 1,000 members in 1959. It was the dedication of these women that brought the Sholom Residence into existence and saw to it that it continued to have adequate funding. Unlike the Jewish Home for the Aged, the Sholom Residence requested assistance from the UJFC. In return for funding, the UJFC received representation on the residence's board and the Jewish Family Service undertook the evaluation of applicants.

The Jewish Home for the Aged was making progress in the 1940s and 1950s, at least as far as its building program was concerned. In 1951 a $250,000 addition that included a new dining room and elevators was opened. Four years later, an annex brought the home's capacity to 157 residents. Unfortunately, improvements in human needs did not keep pace with the improvements in the physical plant. The benign neglect of the residents described in the 1936 report continued. The president of the board from 1947 to 1960 dedicated himself to the efficient running of the home but seemed oblivious to the personal needs of the residents. His attitude toward care for the elderly can best be illustrated by the following comment attributed to him by members of his board: "Look, they have a roof over their heads, a bed to sleep in, what more do they need?"

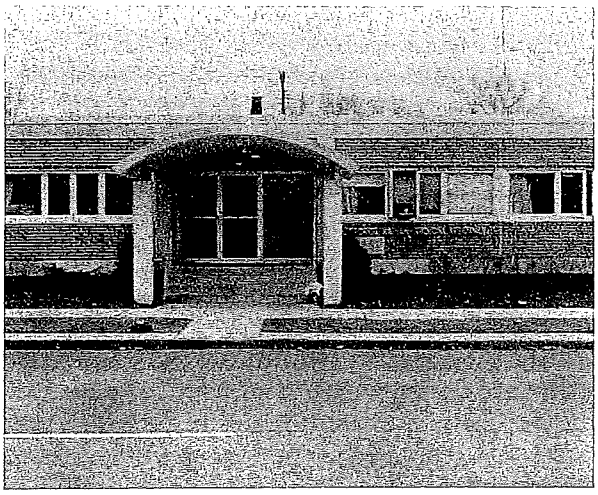
The president also continued other outdated policies that were unpopular with the community. For example, applicants were still expected to surrender to the home all their possessions — a policy that tended to humble the applicant and undoubtedly discouraged a number from applying for admission. Social workers were mistrusted and dependence on other Jewish agencies was avoided. This independence, however, did not discourage the board from accepting $2,500 from the Community Chest in 1952.

The Social Planning Committee of the UJFC tried to address the problems they saw in the administration of the Jewish Home for the Aged. In a report UJFC Director Dan Rosenberg wrote in 1957 entitled "Outline for our Planning for the

*" I walked every day to Sholom — every day — people would see me on Grand Avenue walking to Sholom because I had duties then that I thought the little people had to have and it was important and they didn't have the money. "*

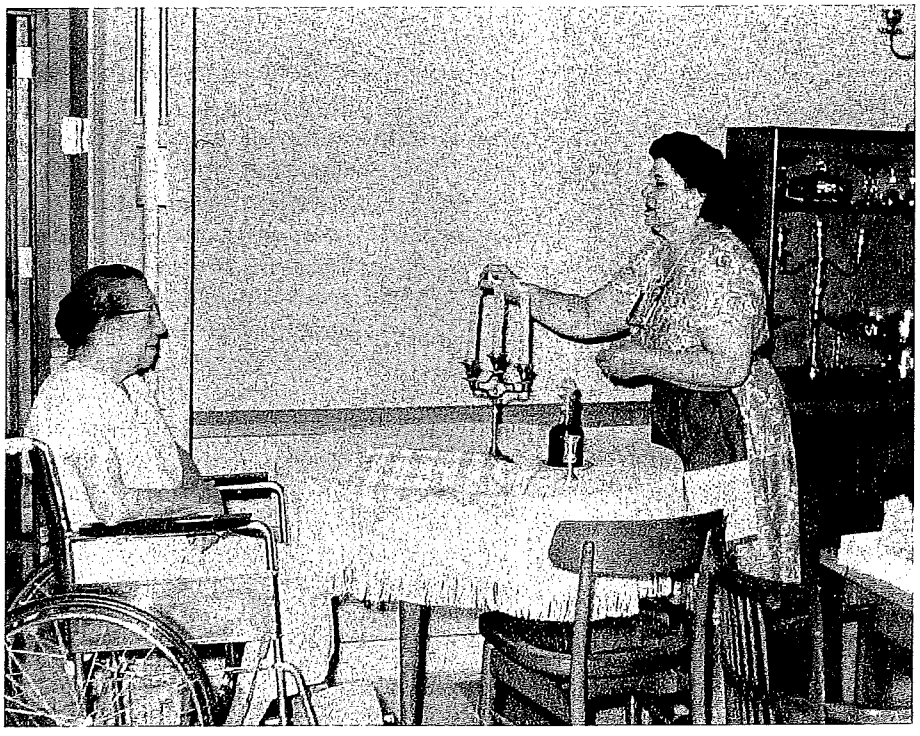
Aged," he criticized the home, stating that although the home was doing adequate custodial work, it needed to do more to prevent the residents' physical deterioration. He used a slogan that was later adopted by the Sholom Home, Inc.: "Not just adding years to life but adding life to years." His recommendations to the home were similar to those cited in 1936: adding to the medical and nursing program, organizing physical and occupational therapy, using casework service at time of admission, using the auxiliary more fully for activities, and developing a central resource for senior citizens.

A few additional changes were made in the 1940s-1950s, but the president continued to avoid accepting any assistance offered by the UJFC and the Jewish Family Service. He did agree to hire a few professionals but gave them no autonomy; several social services, such as a beauty shop, were added. An important program introduced at this time was occupational therapy, funded by the auxiliary. The funding of the therapy program was important not only for the benefits it provided the residents, but because it signaled a revitalization of the women's auxiliary, which had become almost dormant in the 1940s.



**Sholom Residence, 1957. Photo of exterior of new building on Randolph Avenue.**

The Sholom Residence was experiencing its own difficulties in the 1950s. Its twenty beds were always full, but in 1955 the State Health Department ruled that the residence had to be brought up to government standards. The cost of renovating the old building was prohibitive, so new quarters were required. The logical solution would



**Sholom Residence, ca 1960. Lighting Sabbath candles.**

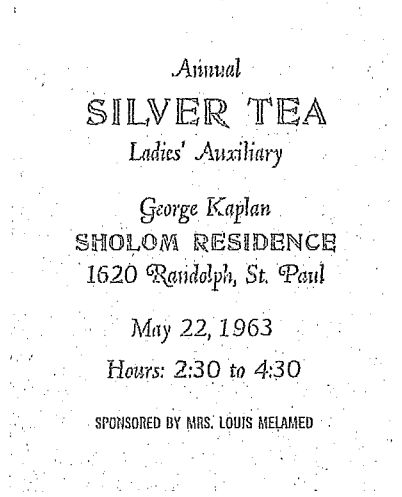
have been to merge with the Jewish Home for the Aged; the timing would have been ideal. The Sholom Residence had precisely those features that the Jewish Home for the Aged was criticized for lacking. But an agreement could not be reached, and the cornerstone for a new Sholom Residence was laid on September 29, 1957. The new building, located at Randolph near Snelling, in the heart of a Jewish neighborhood, was to cost $340,000; it would double the capacity of the residence to 40.

Credit for raising a large portion of the funds needed to construct the new Sholom Residence must go to its active auxiliary. Through two major fund-rasing events, "The Perfect Evening" and the Silver Tea, the auxiliary was able to raise enough money to pledge $24,000 per annum to defray the residence's operating costs. The work of the women's auxiliary would indicate that the Sholom Residence was perceived as an important institution within the Jewish community, as would the several large gifts donated by local Jews and non-Jews alike.

## III

The decade of the 1960s was to usher in a new era at the Jewish Home for the Aged. In 1960, a new president of the board was installed. Many of the policies of his predecessor were continued, but the new president also recognized that the Jewish Home for the Aged, in contrast to the Sholom Residence, was regarded by the community to be a closed corporation. To reverse this perception, the president in his first annual report called for an intensive membership drive. New members, however, were not going to solve the home's long-standing problems. In the same report, a series of criticisms were leveled at the board by the Home's Executive Director, who left his post shortly after publishing his comments. He condemned the board for their unwillingness to deal with the chronically ill, their lack of long-range planning, and their unchanging attitude toward the treatment of the elderly. He ended his report by posing a question that may have awakened the board to its responsibilities: "Was the home a business or welfare institution?"

A year after this reprimand, the UJFC met with the Minneapolis Federation, the Minneapolis Jewish Nursing Home Association, the Sholom Residence, and the Jewish Home for the Aged to discuss care of the aged and chronically ill. Soon thereafter the board of the home began to welcome new leadership; it listened to ideas presented at meetings such as the Governor's Conference on Aging, and agreed to change its bylaws so


Annual
SILVER TEA
Ladies' Auxiliary
George Kaplan
SHOLOM RESIDENCE
1620 Randolph, St. Paul
May 22, 1963
Hours: 2:30 to 4:30
SPONSORED BY MRS. LOUIS MELAMED

**Silver Tea invitation, Sholom Residence.**

that the chronically ill could be admitted. Changes were beginning to be evident in the administering of the home, but not all of its problems were so readily resolved. The board still refused to associate the home with any other Jewish agency, including the UJFC; it still lacked an adequate skilled nursing staff; organized activities for the residents were still at a minimum; and the auxiliary — while revitalized — was not successful in its fund-raising efforts.

In 1964, a dialogue between influential members of the community and the home's board produced concrete results. After several years of experimentation, the Northstar sheltered workshop, administered by the Jewish Vocational Service, became a permanent facility at the home. Other improvements included the professional staff of the Jewish Family Service undertaking the home's evaluation of applicants, and the hiring of additional nurses.

A fund drive was initiated in 1965 to add more beds to the home; its success was realized in 1966 with the dedication of two new additions. The home could now care for 150 residents and had the space to separate the ambulatory residents from those requiring special attention.

The 1960s also saw the appointment of a new member to the board of the home who had the vision to see its problems and the energy and dedication to see that they were resolved. Largely through his impetus, the home's operation was professionalized. More trained professionals were hired, the physical therapy program was expanded, pharmaceutical services were improved, and more outreach programs were begun. Most important, once he became the president of the board in the late 1960s, two important and long overdue goals were reached.

The first of the goals was achieved when the board decided to apply for beneficiary status with the UJFC; in 1970 the home received its first subsidy of $130,000. The board established a policy of using the funds solely for its outreach programs, thereby benefiting other elderly in the community.

The second goal was reached in 1971 when the Jewish Home for the Aged and the Sholom Residence agreed to merge, becoming the Sholom Home, Inc. The merger of the two homes, once it was decided on, went smoothly. The Sholom Residence was sold and the Jewish Home for the Aged's physical plant was improved. It was remodeled in 1977 and enlarged in 1973 and again in 1979. The capacity of the Sholom Home was now well over three hundred beds, double its 1966 number.

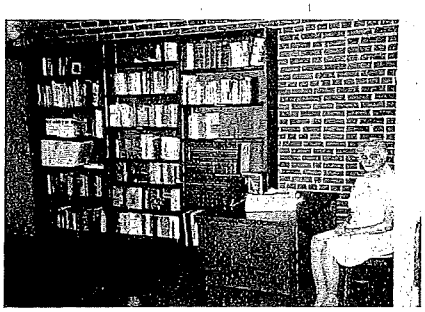
Sholom Home groundbreaking for new addition by Ada Rubenstein, Board president, 1979.

Sholom Home. Preparing for groundbreaking for new addition, 1979.

Sholom Home, ca 1970s. Jewish War Veterans sponsor bingo party for residents.

With the merger came increased professionalism and broader community involvement. The Sholom Home was staffed by professionals including two physicians, a geriatric nurse practitioner, a podiatrist, and speech and occupational therapists. Additional personal services were made available to the residents, including a barber shop, gift shop, and library. In its outreach program the Sholom Home prepared meals in its kitchen for the Jewish Community Center's congregate dining program; a day commuter program was initiated to provide activities for the elderly who were not residents; and a family night was introduced that encouraged involvement by families in the care of their relatives.

The decades of the 1960s and 1970s witnessed enormous changes in the role the government played in health care. These changes had an impact on the financial management of the Sholom Home. The Medicaid Act passed in 1962 and Medicare in 1965 made the government the major source of financial support for services to the el-



Sholom Home, ca 1970s. Library with resident librarian.

derly. As a result, since 1972, Medicaid has paid for most of the costs of running the home and its congregate dining program. For example, in 1977 Medicaid paid $1,732,000 of the proposed budget of $2,600,000. The remainder of the budget comes from resident's fees and other sources, including funds raised by the women's auxiliary.

The merging of the two women's auxiliaries was as successful and proceeded as smoothly as the merging of the two homes. Major events were introduced, including the Sholom Ball, that raised enough funds for the auxiliary to pledge $6,500 a month to the upkeep of the home. The auxiliary also provided another vital service to the home — well-trained volunteers who could provide assistance to staff professionals. Activities that volunteers have assisted in include discussion groups, exercise classes, disease education programs, craft classes, and field trips, which are extremely popular and important to the well-being of the residents.

The Sholom Home is considered by health care specialists to be a model of its type. Although lagging behind for decades in the care of the elderly, in the past twenty years it has made enormous strides forward and is now a leader in its field. The Jews of Minnesota have every reason to be proud of their home and the role they played in seeing that it realized its full potential. However, as the Jewish community of Saint Paul continues to gray, new challenges are appearing. A nursing home study commissioned by the UJFC in 1978-1979 lists potential needs of the elderly. Some of these are in the process of being realized; others are still in the future. They include an apartment facility for elderly who do not require the services of the Sholom Home but would benefit from on-site food services and therapy programs; a facility for short-term convalescent care to prepare people for the transition from hospital to their own home; and a program that would provide a homemaker to relieve family members who have the responsibility for an elderly parent so they could have some time to themselves. Under the management of present Executive Director Marshall Silberstein, and based on the increased responsiveness over the past several decades of the Jewish community to the needs of its elderly, the prospects for realizing all these goals are good.

The Sholom Home, Inc. is the realization of the aspirations of two groups of far-sighted women in the Twin Cities Jewish community. One group was able to raise funds and unite the community into working toward a common goal, a residence for the aged. The other group, equally far-sighted, saw the need for a facility to care for the chronically ill, and against what must have appeared to be insurmountable odds, realized their dream. Although the boards established policies that were neither far-sighted nor particularly beneficial, the women's auxiliaries continued to work — not always without problems — to raise funds and provide services for the elderly residents of both institutions. When merger was finally achieved, the auxiliaries were there to continue providing financial support and trained volunteers to assist the staff. Because of the vision of two women's groups, the Sholom Home has become more than an institution to house the elderly and infirm; it is a home where lives can be lived out in peace and with dignity.

*"The women were more concerned about the comforts ... how the patients felt. The men ... were handling the business end of it."*

# CHAPTER 9

## Talmud Torah of Saint Paul

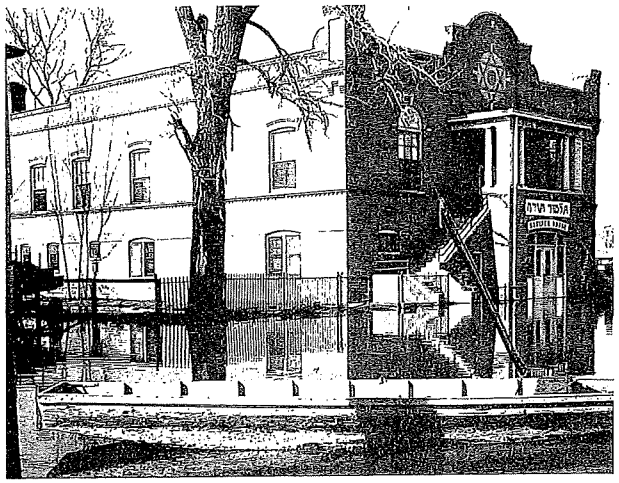
During its history, the Saint Paul Jewish community has supported a number of schools for its youth. In approaching the task of Jewish education these institutions have offered a wide spectrum of programming. Some have emphasized religious training, some Jewish cultural heritage. Some have taught Hebrew; some have used English or Yiddish as their language of instruction. In 1956, a few of these schools came together to form the Saint Paul Talmud Torah, a beneficiary agency of the UJFC. The steps to the merger were somewhat complicated, as illustrated in the family tree provided on page 74. Reference to this tree will aid an understanding of the evolution of Jewish education in Saint Paul during the decades that led to the founding of the Talmud Torah.

Capitol City Hebrew School, 137 West College Avenue, ca 1922.

### I

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, three Hebrew schools strongly influenced Jewish education locally. In 1888, Sons of Jacob built a new synagogue on College Avenue between Wabasha and Saint Peter, on the same site where it had had its house of worship for some seven years. The new structure housed a library and a Hebrew school, where the congregation's young people received instruction from tutors. The school, founded as early as 1881, was a success and soon larger quarters were needed. To meet that need, a group of men from the congregation met in 1911 and decided to build a facility that became known as the Capitol City Hebrew Free School. A site for the institution was found at 137 College Avenue; in 1912 the first Hebrew classes were taught in the new building. The school, described as being "liberally supported by the Orthodox class," employed three teachers and had between 125 and 130 boys and girls as students. Those students unable to pay were provided with free tuition. The school's enrollment came from families living on West Seventh Street, Rondo Street, and Lowertown. A mothers' auxiliary raised enough money to free the school from debt and "provide[d] social entertainment for the children."

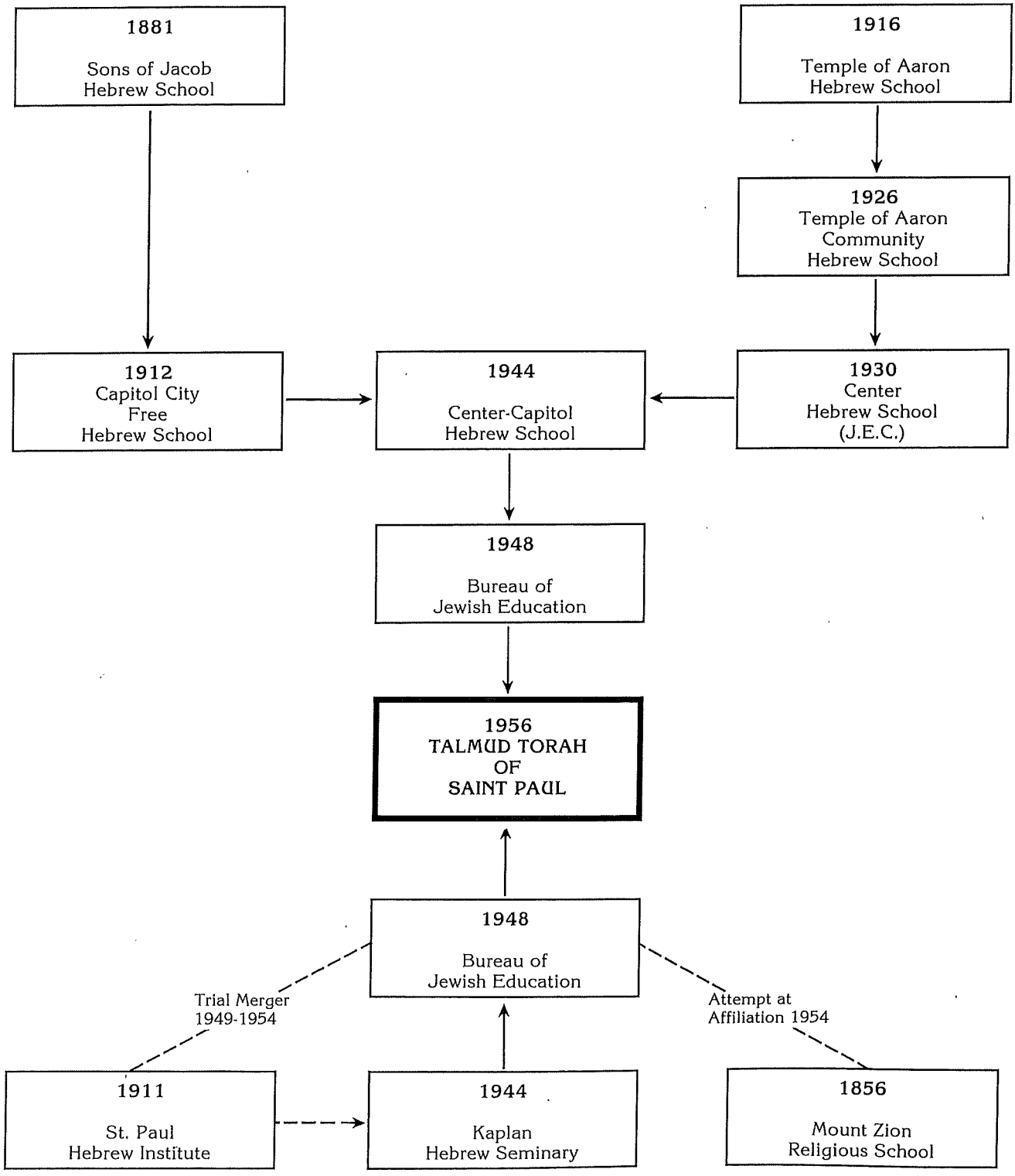
As the Capitol City school did not serve the West Side Jewish community, a Hebrew school, the Saint Paul Hebrew Institute, developed in that neighborhood and shared space with the Sheltering Home in a new building located at Fenton and Kentucky Streets. According to an article pub-



Saint Paul Hebrew Institute and Sheltering Home. Built in 1911; photo taken 1952. *Photo: H.M.Schawang Photo Co.*

> *"We didn't follow the pattern [elsewhere] — each synagogue had to have [a religious] school — This was the pattern in Saint Paul, always..."*

# SAINT PAUL TALMUD TORAH
# FAMILY TREE 1856-1956



Saint Paul Hebrew Institute Women's Auxiliary, 1918. *Courtesy of H.P. Schaffer.*

lished in the **American Israelite,** a national Reform newspaper of the day, in 1911 (the year the Institute and home were established) the school taught children whose parents belonged to synagogues on the West Side. The school performed this service because the neighborhood congregations lacked sufficient space and facilities to do so. The Institute's pupils were instructed through the "old method" of scholarship, being taught Hebrew using Yiddish.

A third Hebrew school, affiliated with the Temple of Aaron, was established in 1916. Located in the Hill District with the synagogue, it provided Jewish education to the children of those acculturated Eastern European Jews who had established themselves in that neighborhood in great

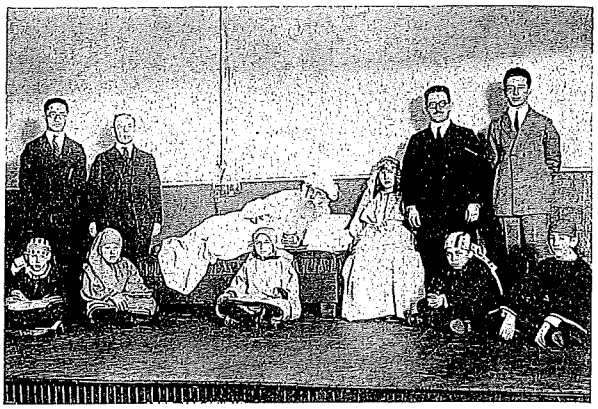
Temple of Aaron Hebrew School graduation class, ca 1924.

> *"... The teacher used to take to those who didn't pay attention with his ruler and bang them or he'd pull their ear... He was a European teacher and he really meant business... they taught you in Yiddish."*

numbers in the early twentieth century, as well as to the children of noncongregants. Under Rabbi Philip Kleinman and its second principal Louis Gordon, the school took a "modern" approach to its studies, using the **Ivrit b'Ivrit** method of instruction, which teaches Hebrew using Hebrew. Gordon, who held his position from 1920-1960, played a pivotal role in Hebrew education in Saint Paul. Indeed, many recall Gordon as being the most influential figure in Jewish education in the community.

In 1922, the Temple of Aaron Hebrew School had an enrollment of 150 students. Four years later it taught 250 students, maintained a waiting list of fifty more, and had outgrown its classroom space. The synagogue's board of directors responded to this situation by voting to establish and incorporate an educational organization that would consist of "members and non-members" of the synagogue. This new organization, apparently known as the Temple of Aaron Community Hebrew School, became a reality in 1926; it absorbed the original educational program of the Temple of Aaron Hebrew School and raised funds to construct a building separate from the synagogue.

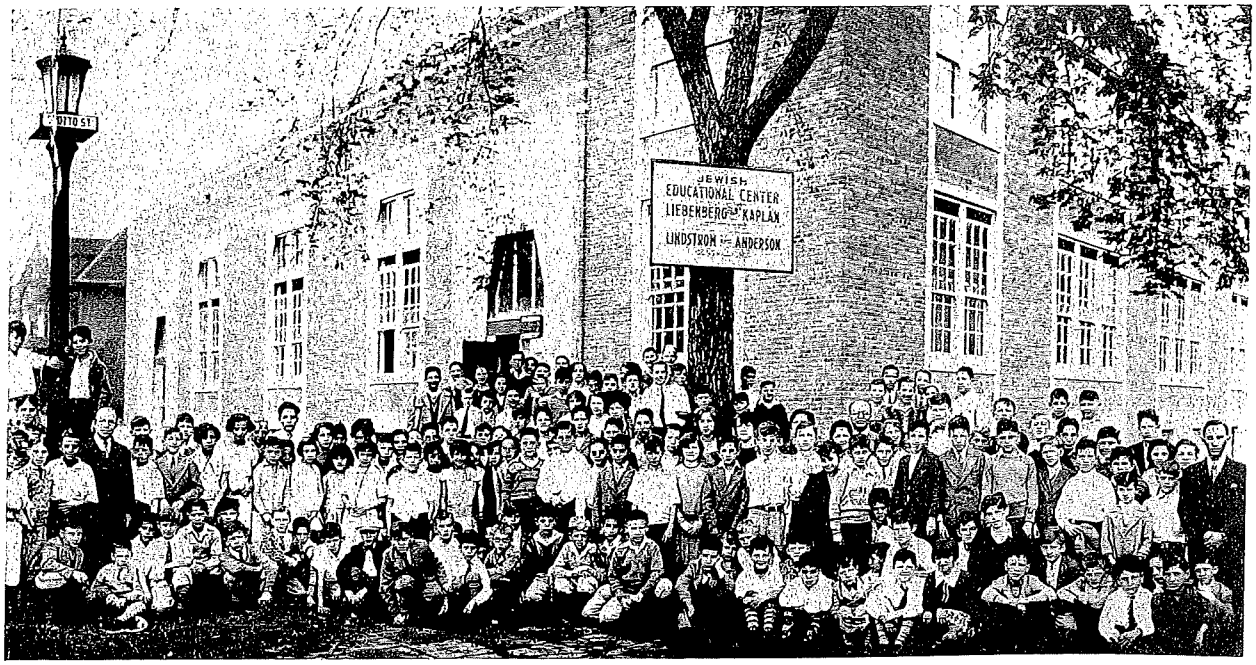
Thus, by 1926, at least two institutions in the Saint Paul Jewish community, the Hebrew Institute and the Temple of Aaron Community Hebrew School, offered educational programming for youth that was not confined to a single synagogue. In 1919, a third but unsuccessful attempt had been made to do the same. Under the auspices of the local B'nai B'rith, a plan was formulated



Temple of Aaron Hebrew School Purim play, ca 1925.

to establish a facility for the Jewish community at large that would house leisure time activities and a Hebrew School. A local Jewish family offered a substantial sum to help underwrite this project. However, sufficient funding was not forthcoming from other sources to make the school a reality, in part because Saint Paul Jewry "with [its] many shades of opinion to be found in [its] various congregations and groups" was not yet ready to integrate and consolidate its school instruction.

The city's Jewish population did not take long to change its mind about adopting the B'nai B'rith plan. The idea of combining recreation and education was popular in the Jewish community nationally in the 1920s, and in 1930 local Jewry joined their co-religionists elsewhere in this policy; they erected at the corner of Holly and Grotto the Jewish Educational Center, a facility that pro-




Jewish Educational Center, 1931. Opening of Talmud Torah in new Jewish Education Center.

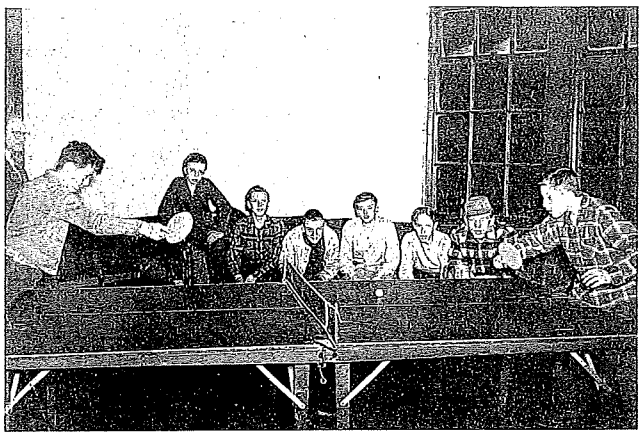
vided leisure time programs and a new home for the Temple of Aaron Community Hebrew School. Limiting the JEC's effect as a unifying force on Jewish education in Saint Paul was the attitude of the Hebrew Institute and the Capitol City school. These institutions chose not to affiliate themselves with the center, preferring to maintain their independence in serving the Orthodox congregations of the West Side and Lowertown.

While these two Hebrew schools continued along their separate paths, the Temple of Aaron Community Hebrew School, now known as the Center Hebrew School, began to encounter unexpected problems in its new building. Soon after the JEC's opening was the Great Depression; people were unable or unwilling to pay their building pledges. As a result, teachers were not paid, building repairs were not completed, and the need for more professional staff to lead the JEC membership went unfulfilled.

A second problem, according to Louis Gordon in his 1932 report to the board, was the Jewish community's lack of appreciation of the importance of Jewish education. Although the Center Hebrew School's enrollment increased during the 1930s, Gordon believed that parents were not sufficiently committed to Hebrew education. In the same report, Gordon documents the students' rate of attrition and meager high school enrollment. He charges parents with the responsibility to get their children to attend high school regularly, to pay their tuition on time, and to lead a life in harmony with the philosophy underlying the training their children will receive. Gordon continues, "How can we expect to ultimately be successful when there is such a wide chasm existent between the student and the home. . ."

A third problem was the logistical difficulties the school and the center leisure time programming had sharing space in the JEC. Some center patrons found recreation and education to be compatible activities. As one former student recalled, "There was always plenty to do, and I would come early to participate in some other activity before going to class [which I saw as] a carrot held out in front of me." However, the school's administration viewed this arrangement differently. Again, writing in 1932, Gordon commented:

> [It would] however be [a] gross insincerity to say that conditions in our school are satisfactory, and that we have solved the problem of Jewish education for our children. Frankly, I must admit that conditions are not quite satisfactory.
>
> Our difficulties are rather due to those things which are beyond the control of the faculty. They are conditional to a great measure on the policy and activities of the Center as a whole.



**Jewish Activities Association, ca 1935. Boys playing ping pong in Jewish Educational Center.**

As a means of alleviating the tensions between the educational and recreational programming within the center, in 1934 a "Committee of Seven" was formed, largely through the efforts of the Council of Jewish Social Agencies, to study the problem. The committee recommended and implemented a reorganization of the JEC into three distinct units. The Hebrew School became a separate association, as did the recreational component, and a management corporation was established to oversee the institution's functions as a whole. By divorcing its education phase from its leisure time phase, the JEC made the latter eligible to receive beneficiary status from the Community Chest, thus helping to alleviate the center's financial problems.

When the JEC was reconstituting its operation in the early 1930s, other events of note were transpiring within Jewish education in Saint Paul. Discussions were held regarding a possible merger of the Center and the Capitol City Hebrew high schools, both suffering from enrollment declines. Such a limited merger, effected in 1933, would, it was hoped, "be the starting point in the eventual consolidation and unification [of the schools]." After its formation in 1935, the UJF became active in the field of local Jewish education, annually appropriating monies to the Hebrew Institute and the Capitol City and Center Hebrew schools. Also in 1935, an independent study was done of these three schools, apparently authorized by the Council of Jewish Social Agencies. Each institution was examined separately for, among other things, means of improving its curriculum, record keeping, and teacher education. The study reached some interesting conclusions, including an esti-

mate that 55% of Jewish youth in Saint Paul were apparently not receiving a formal Jewish education. But perhaps its most significant finding was that Jewish instruction in the city still lacked adequate coordination. The study praised the three Hebrew schools, calling them "on the whole fine," but recommended that a position of executive director of education be established in the local Jewish community.

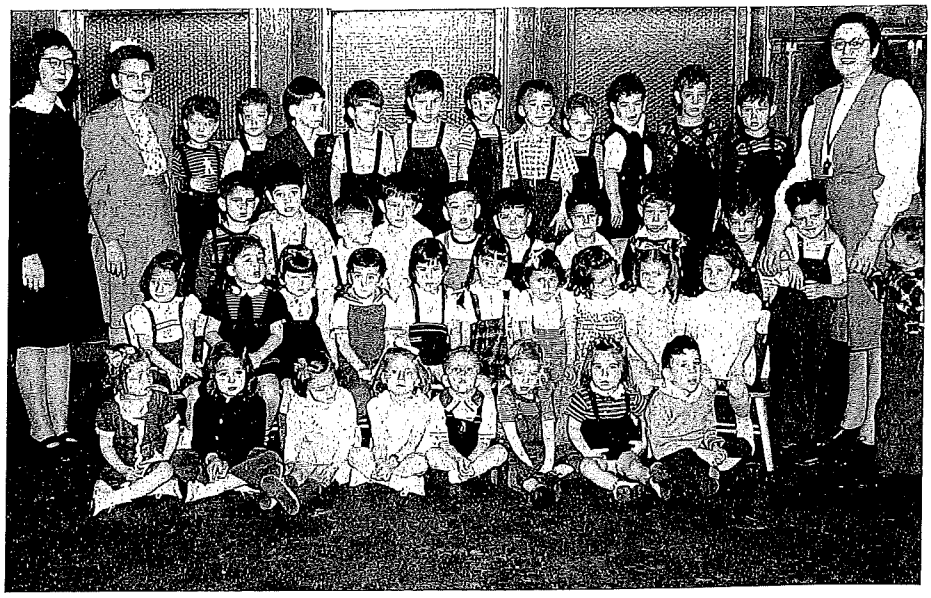
Shortly thereafter, in response to the 1935 study, plans were announced for the formation of a Bureau of Jewish Education to administer the city's instructional offerings. The Council of Jewish Social Agencies saw itself as "the inspiration . . . [behind] this important communal institution." Although the Bureau did not become a reality for another decade, the report was the impetus for other programs, some at the newly established Center-Capitol High School. They included a two-year junior high school program, a reorganization of high school courses, and allowance by the public schools of two credits each for completion of Hebrew junior and senior high schools.

In 1940, seven years after the Capitol City and Center Hebrew schools merged their senior high programs, the UJF raised the possibility of consolidating the two institutions. This idea was broached again three years later by the Center Hebrew School PTA. At that time discussion included the suggestion that some Yiddish classes be formed, no doubt in deference to the Capitol School's use of the old method of instruction. However, after considerable discussion, it was decided to postpone the matter to a later date. Although the records are unclear, the two schools finally merged sometime in 1944, becoming the Center-Capitol Hebrew School.

**George Kaplan Hebrew Seminary, located at 1464 Summit Avenue, ca 1947.**

Offsetting this step toward integrating Jewish education in Saint Paul was the opening of a fourth local Hebrew school in the same year, the Kaplan Hebrew Seminary, named after a local Jewish philanthropist. The seminary, apparently a branch of the Hebrew Institute, in the late 1940s took quarters on Summit Avenue to meet the traditional educational needs of those Orthodox families who had moved west onto the Hill. In 1947 the Sharei Shomayim synagogue affiliated with the seminary.

Shifts in the location of Jewish neighborhoods after World War II affected other Hebrew Schools besides the Kaplan Seminary. The schools needed to address the growing number of Jews settling in the Highland Park area. Through a survey it conducted in 1945, the Center-Capitol school decided that a branch was warranted in the Highland



**George Kaplan Hebrew Seminary first pre-Kindergarten graduation class, 1945.**

neighborhood at Juno and Cretin. One was opened in 1946 with UJFC approval.

## II

In September 1946 the Saint Paul Jewish community's long-envisaged Bureau of Jewish Education came into being when the UJFC's board of directors unanimously approved its creation. The bureau, intended to be the central organization for Jewish education in the city, was

> to create basic standards, [to] receive and consider all budgetary requests from member organizations . . . [to] be the organization to present them to the UJFC, and dispense said funds. And, finally, to be the central approving organization for making changes in programs, structure, or physical facilities.

It was hoped that all the various Jewish schools in Saint Paul would affiliate with the bureau. Besides the three Hebrew schools, these included religious schools at Mount Zion, Temple of Aaron, and the Jewish Educational Center.

But the majority of the local educational community was dissatisfied with the broad sweeping powers invested in the bureau. A member of the Sub-Committee on Education of the UJFC wrote to the director that "parents, not a bureau of human beings, should determine which Hebrew school their children can attend." As a result of this type of opposition, when the bureau's articles and bylaws were formally adopted in April 1948, only the Center-Capitol School and Kaplan Hebrew Seminary were named as members. Under these diminished circumstances, the bureau began its work, taking over space at the Kaplan Hebrew Seminary, where classes continued to be held, and overseeing the education of some 270 students.

Over the next decade, the bureau's difficulty having its mandate accepted by the entire local Jewish educational establishment continued. Sometimes other institutions initiated the problems. For example, by refusing to join the bureau, the Hebrew Institute forced the UJFC to consider whether the school should receive separate funding outside the bureau's aegis. Preferring to avoid having to make such a decision, the UJFC encouraged the Institute to reconsider its position of nonaffiliation. Finally, in 1949 the Orthodox school agreed to a "trial marriage" with the bureau. This arrangement was maintained through 1954.

On other occasions the bureau itself was the initiator of disagreements. For instance, in 1954 when Mount Zion approached the bureau about assuming responsibilities for the congregation's religious school programming, the bureau turned Mount Zion down, citing the Reform instruction as "educationally unsound." An observation in the **Saint Paul Jewish News** sums up well the bureau's situation in this period: ". . . it seems that the Bureau of Jewish Education is not a Bureau at all!"

In July 1954, in an attempt to resolve the bureau's problems, a conference on Jewish education locally was called. In attendance were representatives of the bureau, Mount Zion, Sons of Jacob, and Temple of Aaron. Some new agreements were reached, including creating a central placement bureau for Hebrew teachers in the city and reorganizing the schools' curricula to create uniform programs. But the bureau's problems were not at an end. The Saint Paul Hebrew Institute wanted to disaffiliate itself, determined to maintain its autonomy, even though it had only nine graduates in 1954. In response, the UJFC threatened to cut off all funding to the Institute unless it agreed to return to the fold and rejoin its coordinating body for local Jewish education. ". . . the UJFC will make no further allocations for a separately maintained Saint Paul Hebrew Institute." The agency's executive said in April 1955. For at least the next four years the UJFC and the Hebrew Institute remained at loggerheads over the issue of the latter's status as an autonomous unit within the local organized community, their disagreement often finding its way into the local Jewish press in the form of letters to the editor and editorials.

In the midst of this disagreement, two major developments occurred that augured well for integrating and consolidating endeavors in Jewish education in Saint Paul. First, the UJFC took steps to replace its beleaguered Bureau of Education, creating a successor organization, the Jewish Educational Association, in 1956. Like its predecessor, the JEA had a full mandate: It "would serve as a community-wide agency for the promotion and development of Jewish education," charged with the planning and development of all forms of local Jewish education — including weekday schools, Sunday Schools, formal adult Jewish education, and the introduction of the study of Hebrew into public high schools — and it was to allocate to its affiliates monies it received from the UJFC. But unlike the bureau, the JEA respected the independence of the institutions it coordinated. It "specifically affirmed" an affiliate's autonomy.

Second, the Saint Paul Talmud Torah emerged in the form in which it is known today. For several years the bureau's educational program, anteceded by the old Center-Capitol and Kaplan He-

**Talmud Torah of Saint Paul dedication of new building, 1956 (George Kaplan in center). *Milton J. Blumenfeld Studios.***

brew Schools, had been known informally in the community as a "Talmud Torah." Now this title was formally affixed to the programming the bureau had overseen. In 1951 the Center-Capitol "department" of the bureau enrolled 186 students. Two years later, with the arrival of the postwar "baby boom," it enrolled five hundred students and had outgrown its facilities in the JEC and Highland Park. To remedy this situation, the founder of the Kaplan Seminary once again came forward and contributed to Jewish education locally. On this occasion, he underwrote construction, under the bureau's umbrella, for a new home for Jewish instruction, a facility adjacent to the new site of the Temple of Aaron on the western edge of Highland Park. The Talmud Torah officially came on the scene in the same year as the JEA, being dedicated in 1956.

## III

Although the Jewish Educational Association did not survive past the mid 1960s, the Talmud Torah has continued to serve the educational needs of the Saint Paul Jewish community. Over the years it has introduced some important innovations, including standardized testing methods; remedial classes for special students; high school elective courses such as Contemporary Jewish Living and the Sex Ethic in Judaism; a Culture Language Israel Teen Academy, designed to prepare students for travel in Israel; the services of a social worker from Jewish Family Service to counsel students and consult with staff when necessary; the Parents Education Program, Hebrew classes for parents of first-year students developed to "educate parents through the children;" and a grass roots effort cosponsored with the Jewish Vocational Service "aimed at encouraging and directing young people of high caliber into Jewish education as careers."

More recently, the Talmud Torah has continued revising and adapting its programming to stay in touch with the changing educational needs of Saint Paul Jewry. By 1970 it had restructured its program from five days a week to two days, recognizing the reality of a child's after-school schedule in contemporary America. In response to a UJFC-sponsored independent study of Jewish education in the city conducted in 1977, it extended the professionalization of its staff. In the late 1970s, in order to serve the growing Jewish population in the suburbs, it opened two branches, a school for the northern suburbs, which is still operating, and a school for the southern suburbs, which closed for lack of students. In 1982, it instituted a day school. And it expanded its preschool program to serve what seems to be a growing number of single-parent and two-parent working households among Saint Paul Jews.

Indeed, transformation has been a hallmark of the Talmud Torah's ongoing service to the city's Jewish population. Itself the product of changing circumstances in Jewish education in Saint Paul, the Talmud Torah, in turn, engendered change of its own in Jewish instruction locally. Such no doubt will be a condition of its future service to the Saint Paul Jewish community as well, as the institution, under the direction of Rabbi Yosi Gordon, its Executive Director, continues to remain sensitive to the community's emerging needs.

> *"I think that the Talmud Torah developed a very good foundation for my whole life. My whole outlook toward Judaism developed as a matter of going to Talmud Torah."*

# PART III — CONCLUSION

# CHAPTER 10

# The United Jewish Fund and Council and Jewish Welfare in St. Paul: The Future

## Introduction

The history of Jewish settlement in Saint Paul is nearly a century and a half old. Within a decade of the arrival of the first Jewish settlers, the first Jewish religious organizations in the city were founded. From the community's inception, two apparently opposing forces, unity and diversity, strongly influenced the substance and spirit of Jewish community in the city. Waves of Jewish immigrants from western and eastern Europe, with a variety of cultural and religious traditions, formed a population diverse in social and economic standing. These differences became somewhat less significant over time, as local Jewry sought to become acculturated. But these differences did not cease to exist. While recognizing the need for unity in achieving community, Saint Paul Jewry has always respected its diversity, realizing that diversity, like the varied stripes of color of Joseph's coat, gives the community its vibrancy and special character.

In achieving unity, and community, Saint Paul Jewry has had to strike a balance between two other seemingly opposing forces, continuity and change. Throughout its long history, local Jewry, in meeting its current needs and in anticipating those of the future, has kept faith with its past. It has always put being Jewish at the heart of organized Jewish life, preferring accommodation to assimilation.

But what of the future? Over the past eight decades, the average Jewish family size in Saint Paul has diminished from seven or eight to the present 2.3. As has been noted in earlier chapters, the demographics of the community has changed in other ways as well. The number of Jews residing in Saint Paul has decreased, the number of elderly has increased, and the population center is moving out of its long established neighborhood of Highland Park. What effects will these changes have on the community and on its social welfare structure?

In 1957 Dan Rosenberg, in his position of UJFC executive director, saw the organized Jewish community of Saint Paul at a critical juncture in its history. The community had gone through a building phase after World War II, expanding and improving its facilities. Rosenberg now saw the community as needing to shift its priorities, to develop programs and services in these new facilities appropriate to the needs of Saint Paul Jews in the postwar period. He wrote, "We have the agencies, the buildings, the skilled staffs, and the financial resources. Do we have the vision and the courage to utilize their potential?"

The same question can be asked of the Saint Paul Jewish community today as it once again is at a critical juncture in its history. It must look ahead to its immediate future and beyond. As the community approaches two centuries of settlement in Saint Paul, what roles are projected for the United Jewish Fund and Council and its seven beneficiary agencies? This history of Jewish communal life in Saint Paul concludes with statements by agency directors, in which they share their visions for the future of their agency and its place in Jewish life in Saint Paul.

## The Role of the UJFC in the Future of the Saint Paul Jewish Community

*By Kimball Marsh*

"Anything that concerns Jewish people and the community of Saint Paul is the concern of UJFC." These words express the UJFC's mandate as the central planning, coordinating, and financing organization for the local health, welfare, cultural, and recreational services in our community. Since its inception, the UJFC has strived to unite and strengthen the local service-providing and fund-raising groups into a single force. In the future, the UJFC will continue to coordinate services and to facilitate far-sighted planning responsive to the changing nature of our community. This activity will require increased participation in fund-raising and innovative allocation of our resources.

### Coordination of Services

As our agencies expand and grow and as increased cooperation with our sister Jewish community in Minneapolis becomes more common, the fund's coordinating role will be further broad-

ened. Community-wide goals, such as increased services for singles and the elderly, can and must be coordinated from a centralized source. Similarly, as the need for Jewish education is viewed more and more broadly, the UJFC can and will serve as the catalyst through which the various agencies will be encouraged to take shared responsibility for various aspects of this pressing need.

### Far-sighted Planning

As the fund's demographic survey revealed, we are a "graying" community. In the closing decade of this century and beyond, services to the elderly will take on a new meaning for Jewish Saint Paul. Clearly, every agency will feel the effect of this change and every agency should be involved in the service revolution this demographic reality will create. Hence, the UJFC's role as facilitator for the long-range planning process will become increasingly critical.

### Innovative Fund-raising and Allocation

The demographic survey also placed the total Saint Paul Jewish population at approximately 7,500. This reduced level from the 1950 and 60s reflects a shrinking base from which to raise the funds needed to sustain a full range of social services. To maintain our agencies into the twenty-first century, the fund must develop even broader — and deeper — participation by that population. A new generation of increasingly professional and decreasingly entrepreneurial givers will need to establish new standards of participation to produce the needed funds. Allocations must become more innovative as well: as our agencies' other sources of funding become less dependable, the pressure to fund from **within** the Jewish community will grow. This need, combined with a shrinking and changing campaign base, will present the largest challenge to be faced by the UJFC in the future. And yet, the fund is confident that these challenges will be faced — and creatively resolved — for the sake of the community already over one hundred years old, ensuring that it will continue to grow from strength to strength.

## The Hillel Foundation: Its Future

*By Rabbi Irwin Wise*

Hillel is, in effect, one phase of the overall scheme of the Saint Paul Jewish communal life cycle. Hillel first begins to reach Jewish students during their high school years, familiarizing them with our presence, goals, and values, and cultivating them for their arrival on campus. During the students' college years, Hillel focuses on maintaining and further developing the emerging leadership skills from earlier youth group participation. Ideally, the Jewish student graduates from the University — and Hillel — well trained and equipped to assume active participation and leadership roles in the UJFC and the greater Saint Paul Jewish community. Minimally, many Saint Paul students will leave the University with the essential and basic commitment to support Jewish life in general and in Saint Paul in particular.

Hillel serves as a "Jewish address" at the University of Minnesota for students in the college-age range of 18 to 25, as well as Jewish faculty and the new phenomenon of older returning students (empty nesters and single parents). The younger students in particular are at a critical stage in their development. Hillel's presence provides a forum for continuity for those students coming to campus from Saint Paul's synagogues and centers and their youth groups, including USY, NFTY, and BBYO, as well as reaching out to those whose Jewish needs are not yet well articulated.

Hillel's principles and values reflect and support on campus those of the UJFC for the greater Saint Paul Jewish community. While firmly grounded in the essentials of Judaism, Hillel is committed to pluralism and the full range of Jewish viewpoints. Hillel is open to new ideas, debate, and creative Jewish expression guided by tradition and in consonance with a university environment.

Saint Paul Jewish students, like all college students, have their own needs and agendas. The program at Hillel responds to these aspects, including religion, culture, society, Israel, and advocacy. Lounge and drop-in activities provide informal opportunities to share **havura** (friendship) over a cup of brew or kosher lunch, and to form and further relationships. Hillel staff is responsive to students' needs and interests, and program foci are set in concert with Hillel student board input. Hillel endeavors to be fulfilling and fun — and to offer something for everyone!

## The Jewish Community Center: Its Role in the Future of the Saint Paul Jewish Community

*By Burton Garr*

As it has over the past fifty-five years, the Jewish Community Center will continue to meet the changing needs of the Jewish community in the future.

The basic philosophy of the center, that of a Jewish social group work agency, serving all ages

and people from all walks of life and providing a central meeting ground for the Jewish community, will remain as relevant in future decades as it is in the present and has been in the past.

The goal of strengthening Jewish family life, while presenting new and different challenges in the decades ahead, will continue to be a high priority.

Maintaining and strengthening Jewish identification and education will continue to be an emphasis for the future. The center's role in Jewish education, augmenting the synagogues and Talmud Torah, will evolve with additional creativity and in cooperation with other educational institutions.

The center has responded to changing family needs in the 80s with the development and expansion of day care programs and will continued to respond to those needs in the future. It is anticipated that the trend of the 70s and 80s, with more and more women entering the work force, will continue into the future. The care and nurturing of young children and the concern for the development of healthy life styles both emotionally and physically will continue to receive a generous portion of the center's human and fiscal resources. The center anticipates continued involvement with youth into the future. Although certain concerns of youth no doubt will change with subsequent generations, the basic teen-age concerns of an emerging identity, conflicts of choices, and development of a value system will continue to exist. The center's services and programs for youth while perhaps changing in style and offerings will continue to deal with these basic ageless issues.

The 70s and 80s represent decades that brought about a new emphasis and awareness of health and wellness and the development of a physically active life style. The health and physical education department of the JCC will continue to play a vital role in enabling members of the community to fulfill their physical needs and will continue to be at the forefront in providing educational forums around issues of health.

The Jewish arts will play a vital role in center services to the community in the future. The arts represent a vehicle for maintaining and strengthening Jewish identification and for preserving our rich heritage. The music, poetry, writings, theater, and art of our people will be preserved with a viable arts program.

The present statistics appear to indicate that the Jewish community will continue to age more rapidly than the general population. This development will see the need for the center to expand its services to seniors even greater than it is currently. Activities for seniors will be expanded to seven days a week and will provide a rich array of educational programs as well as cultural and social activities. Seniors will be able to use their rich experiences and talents to volunteer in assisting with other age groups. Supportive services such as medical transportation, grocery-shopping assistance, and small chore service will be needed more than ever as the senior population expands. These services will enable seniors to maintain independent living within the community.

In its early history the center played a key role in assisting immigrants from Eastern Europe to integrate within American society. In the 80s, history repeated itself as the center has worked with Soviet immigrants, helping them become full partners in American society. The center is ready to play this role in the future if and when more of our brothers and sisters are permitted to leave the Soviet Union.

It is envisioned that the center will continue to play a vital role in serving the needs of the Jewish community in Saint Paul as we move into the future.

## Jewish Community Relations Council, Anti-Defamation League: The Role of Our Agency in the Future of the Jewish Community

*By Morton W. Ryweck*

Ideally, if anti-Semitism and prejudice were no more, if Soviet Jewry could freely emigrate, and if they could practice Judaism in their country should they choose to remain, if Israel at last was secure in the Mideast, if all Ethiopian Jews were safely in Israel, if church-state separation was firmly established, and the effort by the religious right to Christianize America resoundingly and permanently defeated, if only positive Christian-Jewish relations and justice reigned in our land, then in all likelihood the services and programs of the JCRC-ADL would no longer be needed. Unfortunately, if past history and the present are any guide, we will not be blessed with this millenial state, in the foreseeable future, and the defense and preventative services of the JCRC-ADL will be needed as much as they are today.

Anti-Semitism, characterized by many social scientists as the "classic prejudice" because of its persistence and variety of expressions throughout history, probably will be registered increasingly by groups on the far left, as well as by traditional sources on the far right. As anti-Zionism and anti-Israel sentiment is more openly expressed, as seems to be the trend, it will increasingly spill over into raw anti-Semitism.

So we will need more aggressive efforts to counter anticipated anti-Israel sentiment and anti-Semitism. We need to build more effective, far-reaching coalitions with all segments of the community, and members of the Jewish community are in the best position to help us achieve this.

Reversals in separation of church-state, and the growing movement to "Christianize" America, will also require us to build more effective coalitions with non-Jews who share our concern, to combat this dangerous trend.

And to work on behalf of our brethren in the Soviet Union and Ethiopia will also require more support from our government and from other groups in our society. So the Jewish community will be asked more and more to help us reach out to the non-Jewish community, personally and organizationally, to work preventatively in achieving our goals.

Our agency will provide the Jewish community with the background knowledge and guidance required to deal with the community relations issues that will confront us in the future, but in the final analysis, everyone's cooperation will be needed if we are to be successful. We must better equip our youth to deal with anti-Semitism in all its forms, to understand church-state violations and excesses when they occur, to be advocates for justice in America for all our citizens, and for the protection of Jewish communities threatened abroad, and, of course, preservation of our rights in our country.

## Jewish Family Service: The Future

*By Sidney Hurwitz*

We've been asked to speculate on the future role of the JFS of Saint Paul. To do so requires that we speculate about the future needs of our Jewish constituency and what a family agency such as ours can contribute to meeting these needs. Response to the first part of the question — predicting major social/psychological problems and needs for the near future — requires no powers of prophecy; prevailing social conditions that produce stress in our daily lives are unlikely to grow less burdensome within the next decade. On the other hand, the effectiveness of family services for addressing these issues is far more difficult to predict. As always, social problems tend to outstrip our ability to provide social solutions.

The JFS will respond to changing public needs as it always has. Two major social conditions will remain at the top of the family service agenda for the foreseeable future: the changing family and the increased number of elderly.

### The Family is Changing

Family agencies must respond to the new forms the American family is now taking. The traditional nuclear family is becoming increasingly difficult to find. Presently less familiar family structures have become the norm. Sixty percent of American families now have two working parents. "Mothering" is now a generic term applicable to fathers and day care workers as well as mothers. Divorce has produced single parent families and families with double sets of parents.

The family agency is one community barometer of social stress. By this measurement individuals and families are experiencing high degrees of strain and vulnerability in the face of ongoing changes in social values, social arrangements, and institutions. Accordingly, the family agency is faced with a strong ongoing need to provide counseling, education, and support for coping with evolving family patterns and changing roles. Our clients for now and the foreseeable future are: couples and their children reeling with the awful aftermath of divorce; young adults groping for direction among a bewildering array of identities and life-style choices; remarrying couples working to form a new family out of the old; parents trying to reconcile career ambitions and needs with child care commitments; men and women testing out new forms of relationship in a society that has put aside the traditional roles of the sexes.

### More People Live Into Old Age

The population of the elderly is another group undergoing massive change. In Saint Paul the concentration of Jewish people over 65 is almost twice the national average! Social changes affecting this population are, in many respects, advantageous. As a group it is better acculturated, better educated, healthier, and more financially secure than earlier generations of elderly. But life prolonged, even under relatively improved conditions, inevitably poses fresh problems: adaptation to physical and mental decline, to the loss of irreplaceable relationships, to the loss of status and economic productivity on retirement, and to growing dependency on adult children and others.

At any time only about 5% of elderly people require nursing home care. The remaining 95% struggle to maintain themselves in as normal a life style as health and personal circumstances permit. For most, this struggle becomes increasingly difficult to manage independently, as the individual moves into the late 70s. This period of advanced aging now begins to need the support of numerous resources, family, and community:

home delivered meals, help with household cleaning and personal care, special transportation arrangements, guidance through the maze of health care facilities. For these elderly people, the family service is now, and will be increasingly in the future, a lifeline permitting the continuation of independent living in the community.

### Jewish Vocational Service: The Future of Work

*By Benjamin Lasoff*

If I were to consult the "futurists" about the future of work, I can easily predict lack of agreement. Some of the pundits suggest that we are heading toward an economic system in which robots and computers will perform all the paid work without the need of humans. Other forecasters raise fundamental questions, such as, "What is work?", "Who will work?" and "Why work?" and stress the importance of the individual's contribution in the working world.

In my opinion, work is here to stay. However, I believe that career planning is not just finding a vocation, but involves planning for one's whole life.

What I see are new and different emerging careers, different client aims and expectations, and different learning options in a bewildering world of opportunities and pitfalls for the adolescent, the aged, the handicapped, the economically disadvantaged, the displaced homemaker, the veteran, the newly arrived immigrant, the mid-career changer, and those in need of financial assistance to continue their education.

With the ebb and flow of job market shifts, international competition, increasing rate of social and technological changes, the challenge and responsibility of making wise career choices will steadily become more demanding throughout one's life span.

Little do we know what "work" will mean in society to men and women ten years from now. The nature of work is in a crisis of restructuring and reorganization, reshaping itself to meet the new needs and new demands of the decade ahead.

Where will JVS fit in? It has a very important role.

In the future, young and old will need all the information, guidance, and decision-making counsel they can get in the assessment of skills, abilities, interests, financial situation, values, personality, motivation, and needs in resolving the questions of "What is it that you really want? What do you have to offer? What are your assets and liabilities? How flexible are you and how do you deal with uncertainties? What plans have you for the time when you retire?"

A predominant trend to recognize is that a worker's motives and values change over a lifetime. As we are a "graying population," the following changes have a direct bearing in helping persons to accept the idea of integrating leisure in career development over the life span. Examples are: shorter workdays and workweeks, longer and more frequent vacations, earlier and better financial retirement plans, more widespread unemployment and underemployment, and a decline in economic opportunities for the middle class.

By examining these changes, JVS anticipates that there will be a critical need for counselors to help people become more aware of both their work and leisure roles and to relate the two.

Far-reaching developments in the world of work and leisure strongly suggest that the importance of work may be shifting for many people. The clear and urgent message for JVS will be to provide maximum assistance for life career development to those whom we serve.

### Sholom Home, Inc.: Our Community-sponsored Non-profit Home for the Aged

*by Marshall Silberstein*

In the future, the demand for additional services for the Jewish elderly will continue to grow dramatically into the 1990s and beyond the year 2000. Minnesota state demographers predict the number of senior citizens over the age of 65 will expand tremendously within the next fifteen years and by the year 2000 will be 23.7% higher than in 1980. This is especially true for the Jewish population in the Upper Midwest, which is more pronounced and elderly than the general community at large.

Sholom Home sees itself at the forefront of providing many of the institutional and noninstitutional services needed by this age group. Presently, our 302-bed home is providing a continuum of services including adult day care, meals on wheels, congregate dining, and respite care.

In the future, new cooperative ventures with other community agencies will be needed to satisfy the demands of the Jewish elderly. Community needs identified include the current nursing home/housing campus planned for the western suburbs of Minneapolis, plus home health care, supervised board and care, subsidized housing, short term rehabilitative care and possibly telephone monitoring for the home-bound.

As federal and state governments reallocate resources for the care of the elderly, it will be incumbent upon us to be flexible and creative. Sholom

Home can no longer afford to view itself as solely providing skilled and intermediate care beds. We must provide ancillary services to our elderly to keep them functioning as independently as possible.

### Talmud Torah: Its Role in Our Community

*By Rabbi Yosi Gordon*

Our Jewish community is now beginning to understand the true role of the Talmud Torah, not as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah training program, but as the center of Jewish learning for everyone. As the school grows and its programs expand, it is not only meeting more needs, but creating new needs, needs to learn, to advance our appreciation and understanding of our heritage.

During the first phase of American Jewish life, Jewish energies were devoted to making a home for ourselves, creating the institutions for daily survival, learning how to live as Americans. The second phase in America was the period of Jewish success. We found our way to the suburbs, built large centers and synagogues, provided programs for the young and for the aged, and created a very secure way of American life for ourselves.

We are now entering the third phase: the need to ensure that there will be an American Jewish community in the years to come, the need to educate that community at all levels, to stem the tide of assimilation, and to create unique Jewish models for American Jewish survival and growth.

The key to that process is **Jewish learning:** "Talmud Torah." For these reasons, the scope of Talmud Torah is expanding. Major curriculum development projects have originated or developed in our school, including the Jewish Ethics Program, the Capp Hebrew Curriculum Project, the Day School Bible Course, the Day School Integrated Studies Project, and the Melton Jewish Values Curriculum. Each of these enables us substantially to increase the quality of the education we provide, and to tailor the studies to the unique character of our community and school.

The addition of the Day School has given us another vehicle for providing excellent Jewish studies, integrated with general learning, for elementary school children. Without the burden of late afternoon or evening studies, the Day School enables us to devote the time needed for excellence in Jewish studies without sacrificing the strong general studies curriculum and without fostering parochialism in our students.

The Afternoon School Elementary department is designed to prepare our students with the skills and knowledge to continue studying Hebrew and Torah in the evening High School. Students who complete the elementary-high school program and graduate Talmud Torah are among the best-prepared, best-educated young Jewish adults in any community in America. Their knowledge of Hebrew Bible and classical sources and texts and their strong commitment to **Am Yisrael,** to the State of Israel, and to Jewish values single them out as leaders for tomorrow's Jewish community.

The adult Jewish studies program offers unique opportunities for nearly 100 participants each year to enjoy the serious and exciting challenge of Jewish texts and ideas.

Gan Layeled Preschool has been expanded to provide day care through its Creative Play program and has significantly enriched its Jewish and Hebrew learning experiences. It now effectively prepares many of its students for the Hebrew-intensive program of the Day School.

On a less formal basis, the Talmud Torah has fostered several independent Torah study groups, for children, adults, and families, throughout the community. And it provides a helpful service to synagogues and other agencies in the community in many educational and youth-work areas.

What will the future bring?

- An expanded Day School, serving more students K-8.
- A Gan Layeled Preschool integrated educationally with the Day School.
- An informal education program, operating in cooperation with synagogues and other agencies, to enhance Talmud Torah's scope and efficacy in the afternoon school.
- Stronger links between Talmud Torah and summer camping and Israel programs.
- A pre-college Jewish counseling program to train students in the art of staying Jewish and growing Jewishly on campus.
- A complete family education program for all departments in the school.
- The national introduction of the Capp Hebrew Curriculum and other curricular innovations.
- The facilities and staff to meet the needs of these new programs.
- Talmud Torah branches to serve the remote Saint Paul suburbs.
- The hope that our community will survive and flourish, led by committed and creative Jews who have learned, and continue to learn, Torah; who are knowledgeable and at home in their tradition.

# APPENDIX

## PHASE I

### Oral History Steering Committee

Norman Goldstein, Chairperson
Riv-Ellen Prell-Foldes, Project Consultant
Gretchen Tselos, Project Consultant, Summer 1977
Sabra Waldfogel, Intern, 1977

Hy Berman
Nancy Burnstein Perlman
Steve Foldes
Andy Gellman
Bill Hoffman
Miriam Kaplan*
Sandy Loewenstein
Marda Lovich
Ilene Melamed
Steve Niedorf
Mary Ann Wark
Gladys Zisson

### People Interviewed

Ida Balick
Sally Berheim
Milton Bernick
Abe Calmenson*
Ruth Capp
Sam Char*
Gertrude Devitt
Nettie & Irwin Epstein
Rev. Leon Fishhaut
Adeline & Joe Fremland
Sarah Frishberg*
Sarah Gepner*
Rose Gilman
Minnie Gordon*
Anne Greenberg
Joe Leibman*
Lou Lerman*
Ethel Levey
Edith Milavetz
Irving Nathanson
Ben Peilen
Sylvia Peilen
Sol Pogoriler
Louis Perlman*
Harry Rosenthal
Morris Rothstein
Estelle Savitt
Sid Selsberg
Lee Senensky*
Esther Sirott
Ralph Stacker
Irving Waldman*
Nellie Weiss
Annie Zisson

### Interviewers

Judy Aronson
Bernice Bernick
Laia Bernstein
Elaine Devitt
Lois Devitt
Connie Field
Steve Foldes
Miriam Frishberg*
Andy Gellman
Anne Greenberg
Miriam Kaplan*
Molly Kaplan
Morrie Lapidos
Ellen Lipschultz
Harriet Meyers
Shirley Milgrom
Riv-Ellen Prell-Foldes
Earl Schwartz
Gretchen Tselos
Avy Weberman
Nancy Weissman
Gladys Zisson

*Deceased

## PHASE II

### Oral History Steering and Implementation Committee

Lois Devitt, Chairperson
Betty Baumgarten
Maddy Braufman
Connie Field
Connie Fox
Andy Gellman
Maxine & Kokie Goldenberg
Marda Lovich
Rhoda Mains
Annette Newman
Riv-Ellen Prell-Foldes
Anne Strasser
Gladys Zisson

### Oral History Advisory Committee

Hy Berman
Steve Derfler
Lois Devitt
Bill Hoffman
Rabbi Leigh Lerner
Martin Markowitz
Riv-Ellen Prell-Foldes
Rabbi Bernard Raskas

### Oral History Volunteers

Arlene Appelbaum
Lois Devitt
Margie Freeman
Adeline & Joe Fremland
Mae and Hy Goldberg
Maxine & Kokie Goldenberg
Norm Goldstein
Annette & Norman Mack
Ruth Markowitz
Phyllis Saltzman
Linda Schloff
Vicky Dim Williams

## Transition Period — Early 1980s

### People Interviewed

Esther Brody
Edward Bronstien, Sr.
Kalman (Kokie) Goldenberg
Rose Godes
Irwine Gordon
Miriam Gordon
Bernard Grodin
Bertha Kanevsky
Eva Levy
Sylvia Peilen
Harry Rosenthal
Harry Wolkoff

### Interviewers

Lois Devitt
Ruth Markowitz
Annette Mack
Phyllis Saltzman
Vicky Dim Williams

## 1984-1985 Period

### People Interviewed

David Bishoff
Judge Irving Brand
Nettie Epstein
Connie Field
Linn Firestone
Andy Gellman
Maxine Goldenberg
Rabbi Yosi Gordon
Marian Herman
William Hoffman
Esther Kaplan
Reuben Kaplan
Sid Kaufman
E. David Krawetz
Merrill Kuller
Ben Lasoff
Rhoda Mains
Kim Marsh
Rabbi Louis Milgrom
Annette Newman
Marion Newman
Sylvia Peilen
Marvin Pertzik
Sol Pogoriler
Ada Rubenstein
Dr. David Tenenbaum

### Interviewers

Jeanne Boutang
Scott Gordon
Babette Hanish
Harriet Kohen
Roxanne Markoff
Chester Proshan
Linda Schloff
Amy Taswell

*This list was compiled by the UJFC. We apologize for any names that inadvertently might have been left out of this listing, as well as any other errors.*